Agama and Silpa

Proceedings of the Seminar

Held in December, 1981

Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute

G D Somani Memorial Building

Cuffe Parade Bombay 400 005.

1984

Price Rs. 30/-

Dedicated to

SRI BASUDEV SOMANI

In grateful appreciation of the
continued assistance cooperation and inspiration

EDITOR'S NOTE

We acknowledge with gratitude the scholars and patrons *who lent all their support in bringing out the seminar* proceedings on "Agama and Silpa' We take this opportunity to record our thanks to Dr (Smt) Kapila Vatsyayan for delivering the key note address Also we are grateful to Prof H. Daniel Smith of Syracuse University, (U. S A) for having presided over the seminar proceedings We record our sincere thanks to all other scholars who had participated in the Seminar and presented their papers

This book ought to have seen the light two years ago, i e immediately after the seminar Due to unforeseen technicalities we could not publish the same, for which we may be pardoned We owe our thanks to Sri J Mohan for painstaking proof reading and also thank M/s Enenjey Printers, Madras for the neat execution

8th May, 1985.

K K A. VENKATACHARI

The Jacket has the picture of the Gopura of Sriperumbudur the birth place of Sri Ramanuja The Somaskanda plate which is embossed on it is with the kind courtesy of the Madras Government Museum

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Keynote Address

by

Dr Kapila Vatsyayan

I am happy to be here this morning on the occasion of the Seminar on Agama & Silpa The Ananthacharya Indological Research Institute has been striving for the last few years to *identify sources of the Indian tradition at its most* authentic both in terms of textual material as also the living traditions In an earlier seminar aspects of temple architecture has been explored The proceedings of the seminar on Symbolism on Art and Architecture held earlier in the year brought to the fore front, the integral relationship between concepts and functional structures In fact the papers presented in that seminar clearly proved that underlying the several variations apparent in Buddhist, Jaina, Saiva, Vaisnava architecture and sculpture, there was a fundamental unity of perception Temple architecture and iconography where macro and micro statements of a meaningful interpretation of meta-physics or for that matter the under-standing of the universe In India as in some other cultures the functional and the symbolic are multi-layered modules

Today s Seminar deals with the very important area of the relationship of Agama and Silpa The temple as a structure is consecrated and made holy only through the ritual No wonder, the temple is considered to be the form of the human body the soul, the Jiva of the body The two aspects Silpa understood as design structure, ground plan, elevation plan and Agama understood as the methodology of bringing to life the inanimate bricks and stone are complementary to each other In fact neither can be sustained in isolation In the Indian tradition, different levels of society in different venues on different occasions through different methodologies space and time is consecrated For a particular duration the abstract becomes the concrete, through a ritual process the concrete in turn suggests, evokes eminates the abstract The process is complete only

when the recurring movement from the abstract to the concrete and the concrete to the abstract is fundamental, be it in tribal society, little villages or great temples

In the enclosure images are created through ephemeral material rice and husks, turmeric and kumkum, hyena and burnt coconut and through water and grain through plant and animal and the resplendant colours images are created on flat earth This is **Pratistha** or installation of an idol The life and **Prana** to this idol is given by the incantation of the Priest. The dialectics lies in the inter changeability and transmutation between the body of the priest and the form of the image In fact the spirit of the deity enters into the body of the priest only when the image created is desecrated, this is almost a Pan Indian or a Pan-Asian phenomenon Here, in consecrated time and consecrated space the priest and the image interact This is at the tribal and village level The rituals of Tiriyattam, Teyyam and Mudiyettu are living proofs

Monumental temples were and are not ephemeral, they are structures created for generations, the Silpasastras lay down rules for building temples, making of images, and the installation of idols The architectural plan, its design and **mandala** as the sole purpose of creating on earth, ritual space which can be consecrated for particular portions through the practice of specific rituals. The Agama texts codify this process of sequentially consecrating time in ritual space. Those on one level while the Silpasastras deal with space, the Agamas deal with time Professor Daniel Smith who has spent a life time in identifying texts, editing and translating them, is once again here with us to speak about the **Pratistha Prayoga** enunciated in the **Pancaratra** texts These describe the rituals prescribed for performance during the construction of the building We have been fortunate to see the results of the excellent collaboration between textual scholars and masters of the **Prayoga** tradition such as Ganapathy Stapathy in their book entitled Pancaratra Pratistha I hope that the passages relating to the Pratistha in these texts will throw further light on the cluster of ritual procedure, the orthoprax celebration which enhances an object as a medium when a deity may perceive or experience the divine presence

I am happy to note that more texts have been identified and that at the end of this Seminar, it will be possible for us to draw a further list of unpublished material relating to the Pancaratra Agama I hope also that it will be possible to have documentation of these rituals in their authentic performance and to have comparative studies with other Silpa texts In this context I welcome here the presentation of a paper by Dr Nagaswamy on the Marici Samhita A related field will be presented by Dr Ramanbhai Shah on the Jaina Agamas One line of pursuit therefore is to inter relate, compare and contrast the prescriptions in different Agamas, the other is to identify the inter-relationship and the complementary character of the Silpa texts and the Agama texts with material in the Puranas So far work in each of these fields has been done somewhat isolatedly and there is no total study available on how the functional and structural aspects of the temple were devised keeping in view the rituals to be performed in the process of construction and thereafter The relationship of structure symbolism, ritual and myth needs to be brought out in sharper focus

Equally important is the whole field of the practice of rituals as studies by different scholars in relation to the text and as pure fields studies In this context the work of Professor G R Welbon of the University of Pennsylvania is of great significance For some years now, he has done intensive study of the Agamas and the practice in contemporary temple rituals and one looks forward to his description and analysis of the rituals in Alakiyanampirayer Kovil in Tirukkurunkuti His paper is important because it will bring to light the relationship of the text and the context, the verbal and the performance and will hopefully once again underline the importance of scholars going to the living repositories the priests of the practising traditions in India

Pre-dating many of the formulations of the Silpas and the Agamic texts are naturally the Brahmans, the Vedic yagnas the Vastu Purusmandala The paper of Dr Prabhakar Apte and Dr Srinivas Supekar draw attention to the ritual diagrams In order to identify the origins of these diagrams, one naturally has to go to the Vedic yajnas especially the Agni Cayana Dr Stella

Kramrisch many decades ago had drawn attention to the Vastupurusamandala in her book entitled - The Hindu Temple She had also identified the sources, especially the Brhat Samhita of Varahmihira I am happy to see that in this Seminar we will have a presentation of the material available in the **Pauskara Sambita** These ritual diagrams or paradigms are of the utmost significance both at the symbolic level as also the functional level The movement from the outer to the inner in a system of squares moving as a coil or as **kundilini**, the placement of the different deities from the centre to the periphery is basic not only to Indian architecture but also to the other arts such as sculpture, paintings dance and music In fact this paper could be considered as a basis for conducting further comparative work on the sacred geometry which conditions and determines the development of the Indian arts in all their ramifications ranging from Kashmir to Kanya Kumari and from Gujarat to Orissa and Assam In fact the paper by Dr Raghunath Purushottam Kulkarni on the Rathas in a way is a statement once again of a fundamental concern where the macro is translated into a micro model of the Chariot wheel and the Chariot The commencement of the **Pratistha** of the **Murti** and the **Pratima** inside the temple logically culminates in the move ment of the Pratima in ritual Chariots and Chariot wheels of the temple

O her inter relationships within the context of temple rituals and independentaly 'will be presented especially by Komala Vardhan in her paper on Bharatnatyam and sculpture Altogether I hope that this will supplement the findings of the first Seminar on Symbolism and temple art and architecture and take another step in the discovery of the fundamentals of Indian traditions relating to architecture and sculpture but more to time and space to abstraction and concretization of the relationship of the specific and the universal With these words I have great pleasure in inaugurating the Seminar

procession of idols in the temples, an opportunity is provided to musicians and dancers to exhibit their skill, which gives entertainment to the public Religious discourses are regularly conducted The agamas also prescribe the duties of the temple administration, during the temple festivals to provide suitable accommodation and necessary sanitary arrangements for the pilgrims, who come from other places Epigraphical evidence reveals that hospitals (aturaśālas) were attached to the temple, to provide medical help for the benefit of the community

It would be evident that the āgamas provide details about rituals connected with worship in the temple and also valuable information about subjects like town planning, fine arts, architecture and civics in the context of temple building and maintenance Thus the āgamas exhibit a practical approach to life and though their main object is to expound salvation, they visualise worship connected with temples as sustaining the varied interests of people in society and affording an opportunity to lead their lives in the pursuit of a higher ideal, according to their capabilities It may be concluded that the agamas embrace not only rituals connected with worship but also inter related subjects such as town planning, architecture and temple-administration

ŚAIVA ĀGAMAS

By

Dr. N. R. BHATT

A science which comes from teacher to disciple from time immemorial is called āgama That which gives the needed knowledge and describes the means for the welfare here in this world as well as in other world is called Tantra *Vārāhitantra* gives the definition of Āgama thus,

सृष्टिश्च प्रलयश्चैव देवताना तथार्चनम् ।
साधनं चैव सर्वेषा पुरश्चरणमेव च ।।
षट्कर्मसाधनं चैव ध्यानयोगश्चतुर्विधः ।
सप्तभिर्लक्षणैर्युक्तमागम तद्विदुर्बुधाः ।।

A science in which creation, destruction, worship of deities, repetition of mantras and accomplishment, means of attaining the six-fold desires such as Vaśya, ākarsaña, etc, forms of meditation and four kinds of Yoga are described is considered by the wise as āgama.

The definition of Tantra is as follows:

सर्गश्च प्रतिसर्गश्च मन्त्रनिर्णय एव च ।
देवताना च संस्थान तीर्थाना चैव वर्णनम् ।
तथैवाश्रमधर्मश्च विप्रसंस्थानमेव च ।
संस्थानं चैव भूतानां यन्त्राणा चैव निर्णयः ।।
शौचाशौचस्य चाख्यानं नरकाणां च वर्णनम् ।
संस्थान ज्योतिषा चैव तथा चाध्यात्मवर्णनम् ।।
इत्यादि लक्षणैर्युक्तं तन्त्रमित्यभि धीयते ।।

A science giving details regarding creation, mantras, Temples, holy places, civil codes, elements, yantras, astrology and philosophy, purity and impurity, and hells, is called Tantra.

Thus the subject matter of āgamas or Tantras is same, ro otherwise one could say that the word āgama is a synonym of the word Tantra. There are also other definitions of Tantra.

तनोति विपुलानर्थान् तत्त्वमन्त्रसमन्वितान् ।
त्राणं च कुरुते यस्मात्तन्त्रमित्यभिधीयते ॥

It is called Tantra because it explains in detail the knowledge relating to Tattvas and mantras, and protect those who resort to it. 'Tan' "do in detail" 'trā' "to protect".

The *Visnusamhitā* states:

सर्वेऽर्था येन तन्यन्ते त्रायन्ते च भयाज्जनाः ।
इति तन्त्रस्य तन्त्रत्वं तन्त्रज्ञाः परिचक्षते ॥

The knowers of Tantra say that it is tantra because it gives means for attaining all desires and protects people from danger.

As the Vedas are coming down from teacher to disciple they also could be called āgamas In order to distinguish them from the well-known āgama-s, Veda s were called by the special name Nigamas As both the Veda-s and āgamas are coming down by oral tradition they are called *Śruti* Kullūkabhatta in his commentary on *Manusmrti* adhyāya II verse I states that the Śruti or the revealed literature is of two kinds namely Vedic and Tantric

वैदिकी तान्त्रिकी चैव द्विविधा कीर्तिता श्रुतिः ।

These āgamas or Tantras are grouped into three varieties: Śaiva, Vaiṣṇava and Śākta Those which accept Śiva as supreme and deal mainly with his worship are śaiva āgamas, those which state Visṇu as supreme are Vaiṣṇava āgamas and those which describe the Śakti or the Goddess as supreme are called Śākta āgamas. Śākta tantras are traditionally enumerated as 64 but the number now found is much more They are grouped in two kinds, Daksina and Vāma· right hand school and left hand school The Vaiṣnava āgamas are sub-divided as Vaikhānasa

and Pāñcarātra The āgamas revealed by Sage Vikhanas to his disciples Bhṛgu, Marīci, Atri etc and handed over by them to the world are Vaikhānasa āgamas The Pāñcarātra āgamas are three fold namely (1) divya revealed directly by Lord Nārāyana' such as Pauskara Samhitā Jayākhya-samhitā etc., (2) Munibhāsita handed over by the sages such as Bharadvāja-samhitā, Pārameśvarasamhitā etc and (3) Āptamanujaprokta written by men whose words are trustworthy The total number of pāñcarātra is enumerated traditionally as 219 or 225 but only a few are so far available

The Śaiva āgamas are four fold Kāpāla, Kālāmukha, pāśupata and Śaiva The last one is of two kinds Kasmir Śaiva and Siddhānta Śaiva Kasmir Śaivism is mainly followed in North India Siddhānta Śaivism is in vogue in South India only There are 28 basic texts in Siddhanta school Kāmika, Yogaja Cintya, Kārana, Ajita, Dīpta, Sūksma, Sahasra, Amśumad, Suprabheda, Vijaya, Niśśvāsa, Svāyambhuva, Anala, Vīra, Raurava, Makuta, Vimala, Candrajñāna, Mukhabimba, Prodgīta, Lalita, Siddha, Santāna, Śarvokta, Pārameśvara, Kirana and Vātula Each of these āgamas has some supplements called upāgamas the total number of which comes to 207 Sadāśiva, the Sakala form of the Parama Śiva, the supreme revealed the first ten of the 28 āgamas to ten Śivas such as Pranava and the later 18 to the 18 Rudras such as anādirudra So the first group of 10 are called as Śivabheda and second group as rudra-bheda The tantrāvatāra paṭala in each āgama gives details of these āgamas and upāgamas, their extent, the teachers disciples, the tradition etc A table giving all these details is appended to our edition of Rauravāgama

The main topic of the āgamas is worship of deities and specially image worship in Temples and all the matter related to Temples They also deal with all the civil or moral codes, initiation, purificatory ceremonies, consecration, daily routine of Śaivas and the Śaiva philosophy These topics are dealt in the four pādas of the āgamas - namely Vidyā or jñānapāda (philosophy), kriyāpāda (rituals) yogapāda and caryāpāda (moral codes)

The temples are the most glorious institutions of our country It is the temples that brought about unity in religion in the whole of the country than any other institution They are the true symbols of the cultural unity of India, comprehending within them all classes of people

The temples are the true abodes of the Divine The image that we see in the temples are not mere idols as many suppose, but are, as per texts, true incarnations of the Divine The Divine power is brought into an image through certain prescribed ceremonials For the proper performance of such ceremonials, there are two factors that are essential, one is the precision and accuracy of performance, and the other is the personal character of the performer It is not true to say Hindus are idol worshippers We do not worship inert idol The image in Temples is not a mere symbol of something that is intangible, accepted as a means of evolution to grasp the Absolute A symbol has a value only as having a significance attached to it through the subjective activity of the person But the Divine Nature of the Temple Image is absolutely independent of the subjective activity of the worshipper It is an objective reality in the image as much as life in our body is a reality This fact could be easily ascertained if one goes through the authoritative texts namely the ĀGAMAS which deal with each and everything pertaining to temples - architecture consecration, rituals, priests, devotees and philosophy The Śaiva āgamas are the sole authority for the Śaivaite temples, the Pancarātra and Vaikhānasa āgamas for the Vaiṣṇava temples The rules have been laid down in these texts From selection of the site for the temples, up to the installation of the Divine, the daily, occasional, yearly and expiation rites to be conducted in such temples, and details about the persons who are to conduct all these rituals are all explained in detail in these āgamas

The 28 Śaiva āgamas which belong to the Siddhānta school are the basic texts which contain the philosophical thought and the religious details of the cult of South Indian Śaivism The worship in Śaiva Temples derives its authority from these basic texts and the digests which give details of rituals based on these texts The images installed in the temples are considered as

gods personified or incarnated and as such elaborate rituals are prescribed from the beginning of selection of site for the construction of the temple up to the installation of the image After installation, daily (nitya), occasional (naimittika), optional (kāmya) and expiation (prāyaścitta) ceremonies or rituals which are to be conducted for the continued presence of the deity in the image installed are also prescribed in these texts

The group of rituals from the selection of the site up to the installation of the image in the temp'e, is named *PRATIṢṬHĀ* (installation), the climax of which is the KUMBHĀBHISEKA namely pouring of the consecrated water on the deity and also on the pinnacle (stūpikā) of the sanctuary (garbhagṛha) etc A summary of these rituals is the subject matter of the present paper.

Though normally the details of construction of the buildings of temples and of images are the subject matter of the Śilpaśāstra, parts of such details are found in the āgamic texts, because during construction, here and there some kind of ritual is found necessary

TEMPLE RITUALS

Having selected a site as precribed in the texts, in an auspicious moment, one should examine the site Many methods to examine the site are prescribed For example one should dig at a place about 18 inches squire, then fill up the pit with the mud agair. If the pit is filled up in full or the mud is more, then the site is auspicious If the pit is not filled up in full then the site is inauspicious Or one should fill up the pit with water and then walk nine steps and return. If by this time the level of the water does not decrease the site is auspicious, otherwise not. This is called BHŪPARĪKṢĀ (examination of the site).

In the same way there are elaborate details relating to the selection of stone and wood for making images or for the building of the temple which section is called ŚILĀPARĪKṢĀ (examination of stones)

Having chosen the site, the performer is to plough three times the site with a new plough made of sacrificial trees, yoking to it two white bulls, young, well nourished and decorated Then the grains such as māsa, mudga, tila, *vrihi* are *sown there If there are sprouts within three nights, the site is* considered as best, if in five days as good Otherwise the site is considered as not good, and an expiation ritual is to be performed After fifteen days or a month the cows, bulls, and *goats are to be made to graze the corn. The presence of cows* wards off the evils associated with the site This ceremony is called KARṢAṆA (ploughing of the site)

The performer of the installation ceremony then draws a diagram called Vāstumandala on the site made even and clean and performs a fire ritual to please the deities of the lords of this mandala Vāstu means a site for dwelling Vāstupurusa is a deity who governs the site and is lying on the site, and his limbs are occupied by different deities Before construction, these deities are to be pleased and permission to use the site is to be obtained, This ritual is named VĀSTUPŪJA

Then one should dig and remove the bones, stones, wood, metal etc from the site which is called ŚALYODHĀRA (removing of paining material)

After drawing a plan of the building, there is a ceremony called laying of the first stone (adyestaka) Digging the foundation at the place of the sanctuary and also of other pavilions (manṭapa, sabhā, śālā etc) after purifying five bricks, tying them with strings for protection from evils, and worshipping them with concerned rituals, places these foundation bricks in the cavity prepared for them Consecrated water from a pot specially prepared for this purpose is also poured on them Then the nine gems, grains metal pieces, minerals etc are put in this cavity and the cavity is filled up with lime powder and mud

Having constructed the temple according to the plan, there is a ritual called *MŪRDHEṢṬAKĀSTHĀPANA* (placing of the top stone) Four bricks in the case of building constructed in bricks, or four stones in the case of stone building again gone

through with rituals are placed on the top in the place prepared for them. Then the pinnacles are fixed Again the gems etc are placed in the cavity and the cavity is to be filled up and the consecrated water is sprinkled over the bricks and pinnacles

There is one more important ceremony before construction of the main building, pavilions, gopura, main door and main pillars which is called GARBHANYĀSA (placing of a pot in the interior) A pot made of gold, silver, copper or bronze, which has some inner apartments is called the garbhaphelā Placing mentally the vowels in these inner apartments, placing a gold serpent in the middle and ten weapons of Śiva in others, the nine gems, mercury, minerals metals, grains, roots, herbs and mud from auspicious places are also to be put in them After a fire ritual, to the accompaniment of music etc the pot is placed in the cavity Then closing it well the construction is to be started

When the buildings and images are made ready by the *Śilpins according to their texts under the supervision of the* main priest an auspicious time is to be selected for the consecration *of the temple and installation of the linga and other* images The image chiselled out according to the prescribed measurements becomes ready *for installation But it still* remains stone or metal until the deity penetrates into it Such penetration of the deity into the image is brought out by means of various rituals As such these rituals are to be performed as explained in the texts with due devotion and faith The Pratiṣṭhā (installation), or STHĀPANA or KUMBHĀBHIṢEKA (consecration with water of the pot) are synonymous terms These rituals are the same for a new temple or when a temple undergoes repairs and is renovated The difference is that in the new temple new images are installed In the temple which is to be repaired the deity which has penetrated into the image is transferred to a pot with water or into a temporary wooden image and when *the repairs are over, the transferred deity is* made to penetrate back again into the image in the temple

The series of rituals which are prescribed for the pratiṣṭhā are as follows

The main performer or priest together with his assistants obtains a ceremonial permission to perform the rituals from Ganeśa (lord of hosts) and others This is called ANUJÑA (permission) from devotees and the holy ones and also from Ganesa which is called Vighnesvarānujña (permission from lord of obstacles)

Next comes a rite called MRTSAMGRAHANA (collecting mud) for sowing seeds After sanctification of a prescribed site some soil is collected through a soil cutter duly ceremonially decorated The earth goddess is worshipped as well as Ganesa and Varuna The soil is brought to the place of fire sacrifice in great pomp

This soil is placed in vessels called pālikas chosen for this purpose They may be five or twenty five made of gold, silver, copper or mud They are decorated with leaves and prescribed grains soaked in milk are sown The moon god is worshipped This is called AÑKURĀRPANA (sowing seeds for sprouts)

Threads made of gold, silver or cotton fibre, besmeared with holy ash, duly sanctified are tied round the wrist of the main priest and his assistants This is to protect them from evils during the rituals till the end of the ceremony During this period they will have no pollution of any kind This is called *RAKSĀBANDHANA* (tying of cord for protection)

Now follows the *PUNYĀHAVĀCANA* (proclamation of the meritorious day) a ceremony done *sprinkling consecrated water* and proclamation stating "let the day be meritorious" Then a ceremony is performed to placate the evil spirits of the village and bring prosperity to the people This is called *GRĀMAŚĀNTI* (pacification ceremony for village) Offerings are also offered to the guardian deity (ksetrapala) of the village Again raksoghna homa, a fire ritual to destory the evil spirits and then a *PRAVEŚABALI*, offerings to guardian deities to obtain permission to enter the building, which ceremony is done by offering rice balls at various points of a mandala (diagram) prescribed for the purpose Then, in a mandala with symbols of nine planets, the nine planets are invoked and

worshipped and a fire ritual also is performed to please the nine planets This worship of planets is not prescribed in the basic texts but is added in the later digests

Now again follows the VĀSTUŚANTI the pacification ceremony for the deities of the site which are sixtyfour This ritual is performed to request the deities to stay in the site as before and protect it so that no disaster might happen So far the preliminary rites have been indicated

A yāgaśālā with sixtyfour pillars in wood as prescribed in the texts is to be built either with stone or clay There are four entrances. *The main Vedikā or a raised altar cubic in shape* is to be in the centre and the UPAVEDĪ or secondary altars are to be set at the extremities of the YĀGASĀLĀ which is to be well decorated Toranas in the four entrances, eight flags of different colours are also to be displayed Asṭa mangalas or eight auspicious things and the ten weapons of *Śiva* are placed around the main altar,

Thirtytwo, nine five or at least one kunḍa (pit) for fire sacrifice are to be built Mostly nine kundas are built The main pot or pradhāna-kumbha with a vardhanī (secondary one) *in which are invoked the main deity and the goddess are placed* on the main altar with eight small pots around and other kalasas or pots in which attendant deities are invoked placed on the secondary altars The pots are covered on all sides except the mouth with net like texture made of cotton thread, into which are put fragrant material, gems, grains, etc Their mouth is covered with tender mango leaves Coconuts are placed on the top They are then clad with garments and decorated A lotus design is made on the altars, plantain leaves are placed over them, in which *paddy and other grains are spread* The pots are placed on them and they are filled up with water with proper rituals The pot represents the body of the deity, the pot as flesh, water as blood, the coconut on the top as head, the thread around as veins, the gems inside as bones and the mantras recited while pouring of water brings prāna or life This placing of pots is named KALAŚA - STHĀPANA (*cf* Ajita, 40, 60 80)

The worship of deities in the yāgaśalā will then commence starting from the deity Sūrya, and the whole detailed procedure of Śivapuja is performed Apart from that all the presiding deities of each part of the yāgaśalā, such as torana, flags, entrances are worshipped The yagasa'a is also purified by eighteen ceremonies called SAMSKĀRA Two pots named yageśvara and yageśvari, lords of yagasa ā, are placed and worshipped in the north eastern corner of the yagaśāla The guardians of the directions are requested to protect the yāgaśa ā till the conclusion of the ceremonies After the pūja of the main and secondary pots in which are invoked the main and the attendant deities, the fire sacrifices are done (cf 40, 81-94) This is named YĀGĀRAMBHA, beginning of rituals in the yagasala, which is repeated for three days

The images which are to be installed are normally made either in stone or in bronze The main deity in Siva temples is Śivalinga which is always in stone The images which are taken out for festivals are in bronze When the images are ready, there is a ritual called NAYANONMĪLANA, opening of the eyes, which is done with a gold needle by the śilpin They are first purified by applying mud and pancagavya then after a ritual, are placed in the water at least for a day up to three nights Then a bed with pillow is placed in the east of the yāgaśāla and the images are placed on them with their face upwards and pointing to the east They are covered with red cloth, certain rituals such as mantranyasa placing of mantras on the body of the images, are done They remain there at least for one night This is named as PRATIMADHIVASA, Preliminary purification of the image

By this time the śilpin sets in its correct position the ādharaśilā or the base stone to support the image Gems, and a diagram (yantra) pertaining to the deity are placed in the hole in the centre of this stone The hole is covered and the image is placed in its proper position and is glued to this stone with a sticky substance specially prepared for this purpose which is called *ASTABANDHANA* (ghee prepared with eight substances) The śilpin is honoured and paid and he takes leave The image is purified again with oil bath and other rituals From now on

no one is permitted to touch the image except an initiated priest of the Śaiva school

The fire sacrifices in all the kundas are concluded with a final oblation and the respective deities invoked in those kundas are transferred to the main or pradhāna kunda After a mahapurnāhuti or a great final oblation the deity is transferred from the main kuṇda to the main pot A pūja is performed to the pot and it is taken ceremoniously with all the pomp and is placed near the image to be installed In the prescribed auspicious moment the deity is transferred ritualistically from the pot to the image and then contents of the pot are poured on the image This is called Kumbhabhiseka, consecration, of the image with the consecrated water pot The same procedure is followed in the case of subordinate deities

Once the deity is installed and consecrated, the obligatory as well as all other prescribed rites are to be conducted daily The presence of the deity invoked and established by the consecration ceremonies will continue to remain as long as the prescribed rituals are performed, Such presence will fulfil the desires of the devotees who come and worship in the temple This is the essence of temple worship

NITYA RITES

The daily obligatory rites or *pujas* begin to be performed in the temples immediately after the *pratiṣṭha* In most cases these *pujas* are performed six times a day Each *pūja* is preceded by *abhiseka* that is the bathing of the image with the prescribed materials After the bathing the image is dressed in new garments and decorated with ornaments and garlands *Abhiṣeka alankara* and *dipārādhana* must be said to constitute the characteristic features of each *pūja*, The *dipāradhana* consists of the waving in front of the image of various kinds of lighted lamps This is done to the accompaniment of Vedic *mantras* The dīpārādhana is followed by the offering of the *upacāras*, such as *darpana*, *chatra* *cāmara*, *vyajana*, *patīkī* and *tālabinda* Then comes the *arcana* or the offering of flowers usually one hundred and eight in number and the

pūjā is brought to an end with the *arātrika* or the waving of lighted camphor before the image At the end of the *pūja*, representative passages from each Veda are recited Benedictory formulas are also repeated, invoking the favour and blessings (āśīrvāda) of the god Thereafter, follows the singing of the devotional songs which had been composed not in Sanskrit but in the local language of the Saiva saints

Besides, what may be called the official *nitya pūjās* there are also *arcanas*, which are often performed on behalf of the devotees by the official priests of the temple The *arcana* usually consists of an offering of flowers to the accompaniment of the recital of the names of the gods The names number sixteen, one hundred and eight or three hundred, or even one thousand. Plantains betel, arecanut, and coconuts are offered as *naivedya* and after the *arcana*, portions of these together with flowers etc are returned as *prasāda* to the devotee on behālf of whom that particular *arcana* is performed

On special occasions the *abhiṣeka* is very elaborately performed It commences with the annointing of the image with *taila*, the other materials used for the bathing are taken up in the following order, *pista*, *āmalaka*, *rajani*, *pañcagavya*, *ksira*, *dadhi*, *madhu*, *ghrta*, *ikṣusāra*, *phalasāra*, *nālikerodaka*, *anna*, *usnodaka*, *vibhuti*, *kunkuma*, *candana*, *gandhodaka* and the sacred waters of the Ganges The *abhiṣeka* is followed by the wiping of the image with a soft cloth

Silken garments, golden *kavaca*, precious ornaments studded with diamonds and other stones, and garlands of flowers are used for the decoration of the image

Cooked food of various kinds called *citrānna*, *māṣapūpa* ladduka, fruits, arecanuts, betel and nālikera, form the main offerings at the *naivedya*, daily and on special occasions,

UTSAVAS

Apart from the *nitya-pūjā*, the normal procedure of which is briefly described above, each Śaiva temple celebrates what is called *utsavas* The most characteristic features of such *utsava*

in the South where the Agamic tradition prevails is the *pradakṣina* or the taking round in procession of the image The image which is thus taken round in procession is usually made of bronze and is decorated with ornaments and garlands It is given a pose befitting the occasion and the vehicle on which the procession is conducted The *utsavas* also are of two types the *nitya* and the *mahotsava* also called the *brahmotsava* which takes place on some fixed day or days in the course of the year Different temples celebrate the *mahotsavas* on different days

For the daily festivals a special image is to be prepared Gold or silver or copper is prescribed for the preparation of this image The procession or the *pradakṣina* of the image is characterised by the use of canopy umbrella chowris and *dipas* (torches) and by singing dancing and playing on various instruments The *talas* to be played in the course of the procession are prescribed Among these are mentioned *pangani vrsatila bhrngitala* and so on The devotees also join the procession

The celebration of the *mahotsava* is much more elaborate It commences with the *vrsayaga* which is followed by the *dhvajaroha*, or the hoisting of the flag *ankurarpana yāgapuja astrayaga balidana yanakrama nirajana cūrnotsava* and *tirtha* These various rites are described in detail in the treatises on the Śaiva rituals The duration of the special festival varies from eighteen to twentyseven days The normal duration however is ten days The *brahmotsava* is so timed that the *tirtha utsava* which is celebrated on the last day falls on the new-moon day or the full moon day or under the special *nakṣatras* The festival begins with a worship offered in honour of *Ganesa* The rites of *mrtsangrahana raksabandhana ankurarpana vastusanti* are duly gone through The *vrsa yaga* in honour of the *vrṣabha* is performed on the night preceding the day of the hoisting of the flag For this latter rite the *dhvaja pata* is prepared as prescribed and the symbol of the god and other auspicious signs are drawn on it The *pratiṣṭha* rite infuses the banner with vital force The *dhvajapata* is then taken out in procession and brought to the flagstaff With an invocation to the various gods to be present the flag is hoisted The rite of invoking the gods is called *samastadevatāvāhanam* The *yāgaśālā* is established

in the north eastern corner of the temple Till the *ava'ohana* of the flag the *yāgapujā* has to be performed daily *Balis* in the form of balls of rice, are offered daily, at the *dhvajadanda* and the cardinal points of the quarters After these rites, both in the morning and the night, the image is taken out in procession, Different vehicles are prescribed for this purpose on different days

The procession in the *ratha* must, however, be regarded as the grandest event in the *brahmotsava* The *ratha* or the chariot is normally used for the procession on the day preceding the last day It must however, be pointed out that the practice in this respect varies from place to place The *Karanagama* devotes one full chapter to the *pratiṣtha* or the formal installation of the *ratha* The *guru*, the performer of the rite, accompanied by his assistants, follows the *ratha*, repeating the *mulamantra* silently The devotees follow closely Some of them go ahead dragging the chariot by the ropes fastened to it The procession of the image of the god from the temple to the chariot and back is always grand and very imposing,

The *cūrnotsava* marks the end of the festival The ceremony begins with the usual preliminary rites *Sahadevi kostha, rajanī tambūila gandha* and *puṣpa* are among the materials required *for it* Turmeric is put into the *ulughala* which is supposed to be identical with this mundane world It is powdered and then mixed with *taila ghrta gandha* etc The mixture is then collected in a vessel, and the image is anointed with it *Subsequently the devotees also besmear themselves with it* Thereafter the image is taken to the *tirthasthana* or a river The *astraraja* who serves as the substitute for the principal deity, is first bathed with the *abhiseke dravyas*, and is then immersed into the waters of the river, which are already sanctified by purificatory rites The avarchana of the flag marks the end of the *brahmotsava* The deities invoked to be present on the *dhvaja-danda* on the first day are now implored to retire to their respective abodes

One of the most important festivals in the saiva temples in the South is the *vaivahya utsava* which represents the celebration

of the wedding of Śiva with Umā This *utsava* is invariably celebrated immediately after the *brahmotsava*, that is, on the day following the *dhvaja-avarohana* In some temples the *vaivāhya-utsava* is celebrated before the *avarohana* itself *Ganeśa pūja* and *punyāhavācana* mark the commencement of the *vaivahya* ritual These are followed by the usual rites of *ankurārpana*, *raksābandhana*, *kanyādana*, *pānigrahana*, *sūtradharana agnipradaksina*, *lājahoma* and finally *āśīrvacana* The Vedic mantras are employed at the appropriate places

The *śāntihoma* and *prayaścitta* are performed at the end of elaborate rites such as *pratisthā* and *utsava* They are expected to bring about a peaceful atmosphere and atone for all shortcomings of the performance of such elaborate rites of great duration, for, the *pratistha* and the *utsava* rites it must be remembered, continue, each for several days

A reference must be made, at this stage to other special festivals The eight great episodes in the career of Śiva, which have been *described* at *various places in the* Purānas, *are* re-enacted, so to say, by way of festivals A few Śaiva temples of the South celebrate special festivals of this nature, portraying the exploits of the god, which do not find place in the great Purānas, The temple at Madura, for instance, celebrates *sixtyfour* exploits, all of which proclaim the greatness of god Śiva enshrined in that temple These exploits are recorded in the *sthala* Purānas which are works specifically associated with those temples alone The *Hālāsya mahātmya*, which glorifies the god in the temple of Madura, contains detailed descriptions of all these exploits

PRĀYASCITTA

The *prāyaścitta* is the rite performed to rectify the defects and shortcomings which may have crept in, whether knowingly or unknowingly, in the performance of the various rites and may have thus adversely affected the perfection of the ritual as a whole Whenever any discrepancies are suspected the *prāyaścitta* or the expiatory rite has to be performed An expiatory rite, is

indeed, essential for the welfare and prosperity of the performer For, the worship, which is even slightly deficient, not only does not serve the desired purpose, but it definitely leads to positive calamitous results Various *prāyascittas* are, therefore, prescribed in the ritual texts, in respect of the various kinds of violations that may have occurred They sometimes take the form of *abhiseka*, sometimes of *homa*, in which *prāyascitta ahutis* are offered on the fire, It may be pointed out at this stage that, besides the expiatory rites, *santi homa* and *disa-homa* are prescribed to be performed at the end of *naimittika* ritual, such as the one in connection with the *pratistha* and the *utsava*

GENERAL

Before concluding, a few words may be said about the performers of the rites described above The performer is known by various designations, such as *deśika*, *guru*, *ācarya*, and *arcaka* The chief performer is called the *pradhānacārya*. Those who assist him in the *agnikarya* to be performed in the *yāgasala*, are called *rtviks* or even *murtipas* Another priest who assists the *pradhānācarya* in various ways is the *sadhakacarya* It is his duty to refer to the *paddhati*, or the practical manual of ritual during the performance, and thereby to draw the attention of the performer to the proper order of the various rites and their details The chief *ācārya* performs the *naimittika* rites, while the *arcakacarya* performs the *arcana* or the daily pujas The *alankāranacarya* is in charge of the decoration of the image In addition to the duties mentioned above, the *sdhakācarya* collects together the various materials required for the rites and makes them available whenever they are wanted

The *ācārya* should have been born in a Śaiva family He should be a householder, and his age should be between sixteen and seventy years, He should be endowed with perfect limbs He should have *sikhā* but should shave off moustache etc, He should have already gone through the *dīksa* rite He should be eloquent and of amiable personality He should be an adept in the various branches of learning, and should be a regular worshipper of Śiva, Agni and *guru* He should be skilled in all *mantras* and *mudrās* and the rituals and be acquainted with other branches of Śaivism, namely *caryī*, *Yoga*,

and *jñāna* He should also be well versed in the philosophy of Śaivasiddhānta Among the functions assigned to him are *sthāpana yajana*, *yājana adhyayana*, *adhyapana*, *dāna* and *pratigraha* The *dīkṣā* rite is intended to initiate the performer properly in the folds of Śaiva orthodoxy It is designed to bring about the spiritual purification of the upāsaka, and thereby qualify him for participation in the rituals, both of daily and special occurrence The *guru* plays a prominent part in the *dīkṣā* rite, He himself performs the rite and formally effects the initiation of the *śiṣya*, or disciple The *śiva-dīkṣā*, *samaya-dīkṣā viśeṣa dīkṣā* and the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* are performed one after the other, at intervals, whenever the *guru* feels satisfied about the maturity and the growing efficiency of the *śiṣya* The *śiva-dīkṣā is prescribed in respect of any person irrespective of his caste* The *viśeṣa-dīkṣā* and the *nirvāṇadīkṣā* are very elaborate affairs, and a *śiṣya*, who becomes accomplished in the matter of Śaiva ritual and philosophy, is alone fit to receive them

Each kind of *dīkṣā* mentioned above presupposes the employment of the usual requisites of the ritual, such as *yāgaśālā*, *kumbha*, *kuṇḍa* and *maṇḍala* The *maṇḍapa pūjā*, *kalāśodhana*, *homa*, etc, are all porformed by the guru himself. The *maṇḍapa-pūjā* and the *homa*, have been already referred to above The *kalāśodhana*, is an elaborate ritual, whereby the purification of the *kalās*, such as *śānti*, *pratiṣṭhā*, *vidyā* and *nivṛtti* are effected through various *bhāvanās* or mental processes as also by means of *nyāsas*, performed in the accompaniment of the appropriate *mantras* The impurities of the physical body are thus removed and the *śiṣya* becomes endowed with a new body called *śivamaya śarīra* or *śāmbhava śarīra* In these rites a highly developed personality and strong will-power are expected on the part of the *guru* For, by means of some mental process the guru has to assume a subtle form and then has to enter into the body of the *śiṣya* in order to effect the necessary changes in him to a spiritually advanced state After these rites are gone through the *guru* enjoins on the *śiṣya* his duties

A reference may also be made at this stage to the close connection that exists between the Śaiva rituals on the one hand, and fine arts such as music, dance and architecture on the other It has to be remembered in this connection, that the

association of the *bharata natya* with the ritual is not a little responsible for the preservation of that art today. The *ganikas* were formally attached to the temples and they had to perform dances suitable for this purpose which were duly prescribed Similarly the *mangala-vādya*, which consists of playing on the drum and the flute called *nādasvara* in the South, provides music during the performance of rites Eighteen *vādyas* are often mentioned in the ritual texts The tunes which are to be played on them at particular moments in the course of the ritual are also specified in those texts

The devotional songs to be sung in connection with the *pūjā* almost enjoy the prestige of the Vedas These songs were composed by the saints of the South, and are arranged into twelve sections They are recited at the appropriate moments in the course of the ritual to the prescribed *raga* and *tāla* This practice has undoubtedly helped the preservation of the rare melodies, which would have otherwise been lost to us These religious melodies play a prominent role in the musical system of the South In the singing of these devotional songs, the *pan* and the *tala* are given special consideration Indeed, they are in relation to the songs, what *svara* is in relation to the Vedic *mantras* At the *dhvajārohana* or the hoisting of the flag already referred to, the rite known as *sandhyāvāhana* is performed In connection with this rite, the *raga*, *tāla*, *pan* and *nrtta* are prescribed to be demonstrated by their exponents

While, in most of the temples in North India rituals are conducted according to the digests belonging to Vedic school now available in print, rituals prescribed in āgamas are still in practice in the Temples in the South India. These rituals are conducted without much change, and are coming down to us traditionally But the tradition which now continues conforms to the digests In case of Śaiva rituals, a digest named Kriyākramadyotikā by Aghoraśiva of 12th century is the one which without much change is mostly followed This digest deals whith all aspects of Śaiva rituals and is based on Śaivāgama basic texts Originally there were some differences between different texts, but to avoid difficulties and disputes

the great Aghoraśivācārya, one learned in all the Śaivāgama *texts took out the essence and wrote this manual And in* practice today, it is possible to observe that this digest is *completely followed in all the* Śaiva temples

Thus, for practical study the digests are very important, but it is also important to study the original sources of these digests which are the basic or mūla *āgama* texts They are as important as the Vedas which are considered as authority for the digests of Vedic school

Hayasirsha Pancharatra - Some Aspects

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Hayasirsha Pancharatra is an ancient treatise on architecture and consecration of images It is unique in many respects because it is one of the earliest authentic references to the Pancharatra system of worship In fact, it integrates the concepts that bridge the parallel, and perhaps relatively older Vaikhanasa mode, in terms of cults of divinities which were in common parlance, particularly under Vaisnavism It is important to note however that it details the position as it was where there had not been any water-tight compartments, between Vishnu worship and Siva worship Although both cults had pre—Agamic stages, the established Agamic procedures has not yet become the usage in this regard. The only manuscript available of this work was in the Varendra Research Society, Rajshahi (now in Bangladesh) and we owe it to the dedicated labours of the Founder—President of that Society, the late Sarat Kumar Ray, for having discovered, identified and annotated the first 4 patalas in the first volume in 1952 whereafter he passed away, and the remaining 30 patalas were edited by late Bhuban Mohan Sankhyatirtha as a second volume, in 1956, which alone are the available parts of the work of its Adikanda, as published

The work is considered as datable to the early 9th Century A D and seems to have several overlaps with another text of this period namely, the Agnipurana, in such a way as to indicate that the former is relatively the earlier of the two by an internal reference of the former in the latter The Pancharatra scriptures not only form important source material for vaishnava religious literature, but also have been considered as the synthesis of the *Vyuha* concept of Vishnu In Vaishnavite works of a philosophical and hieratic nature, the manifestations of God head are divided into five notional aspects, namely the *Para*, *Vyuha*, *Vibhava*, *archa* and *Antaryami* All these are not necessarily to

be taken in a sequential sense, but rather coeval divisions towards a single metaphysical focus, the *Vyuha* form is the nearest development of the *Parabrahma* or the supreme shapeless, formless and universalised divine principle* that governs all action-based phenomena in this world and *archa*, the latest manifestation, meaning an iconic worship The *Vyuha* is a quadruple presentation of the divinity although it is customary to consider it as five—fold The first architectural and iconographic presentation of the *Vyuha* form has already become related, in material evidence, under the Bhagavata cult in the second century BC, at several places like Vidisa Nagari—Madhyamika, etc This was under the Krishna myth by which Vasudeva, as the nodal divinity, divides itself into Sankarshana, Pradyumna and Aniruddha It is obvious, however, that this was, historically speaking, an apotheosis of the heroic members of the Vrishni—Vasudeva clan, in the immediately post—Epic period, after Mahabharata, and crystallized the fusion of both Vedic and non—Vedic elements in Hindu religion In so far as the Pancharatra system is concerned, the name itself suggests five—fold divisions of ritual schedule and thus will also lend itself to a five—fold manifestation of the *Vyuha*, as indeed happened in the post Christian period, by which Satyaki, one of the members of Yadava clan was also customarily included in the grouping of the *Panchaviras* and spread all over South India along with Subhadra as the only female member of the clan and equated with *Ekanamsa* (Durga)

The Hayasirsha Pancharatra is considered essentially as a *Tantra* in the sense in which all action—based esoteric rituals under Hinduism were categorised, although one should be wary of using the term shorn of its context for the truly *tantric* works of the medieval period which bring in a wide variety of esoteric manifestations and concepts and relate essentially to the temples of the Sakta or Devi cult One of the special references in the opening chapter of Hayasirsha text is regarding the

* Pasyatyachakshuh sa srnotyakamah
Apanipado javano grihita—sruti
Sankalpa hetubhuta karana-kalebarāvasthāchit
—Samsargāpeksha *nāstityarthah srutaprakāsikā*
(1-1-19 sutra)

priests to whom this should not be revealed or by whom it should not be permitted to be practised In this, a specific reference is made to the following regions of India or places, namely, Kacchadesa (Kutch—Gujarat), Kaveri, Konkana, Anga, Kamarupa, Kalinga, Kanchi, Kashmira and Kosala to which, Maharashtra has also been added in the text It is immediately apparent that not only does it symbolise a patent situation where certain different and anti thetical cults had been prevalent in all the above regions but also covers a good part of the present day Assam, Bengal, Orissa, North and South Bihar, Gujarat, Maha rashtra, Coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kashmir This indicates seemingly the prevalence of a strong Sakti-based worship in these areas by the time the Hayasirsha text had been redacted, upon which the Pancharatra text of Hayasirsha frowned On the other hand, it is seen that in the divinities whose iconographic features and modes of consecration are described in the text, it includes, besides Vishnu, Garuda, Lakshmi, Brahma and Surya, also the Lokapalas, Rudra, Gauri, Sivalinga, Ardhanari, Harihara and Ganesa It also includes the Saptamatrs, among whom uniquely the inclusion of Skanda is mentioned—perhaps the only one of its kind—although iconographic parallels for these may, as yet, be hard to find in India It thus supports, however, the formative nexus between Skanda and the Matrs which should have been ritually identified from the earliest stages of the Matr cult The text is full of references to several other tantras, 25 in number including the Hayasirsha, and the Trilokya Mohana, and leaves one in no doubt that it had co-evality with many of them It also takes note of the cate gories of people to whom the text is taboo, among whom Hetuvadins, Jaimini, Sugata, Kapila and Akshapata are mentioned

The presentation of the architectural methods of temple building also reveals a certain formative stage, during which only four types of *Prasadas* were more common These were the *Chaturasra* or square, *Vritta* or circular, *Ayata* or rectangular and *Vrittayata* or apsidal It should be apparent, here again, *that the* ***Ashtasra*** *or Sadasra, namely the octagonal or* hexagonal forms of plan, have not been included We know that some of the earliest among the octagonal or hexagonal forms had already

been current, *in tangible terms by early 6th century AD onwards*, and thus their exclusion should be considered as a matter of some importance in the germ context of the Pancharatra system which is taken, by and large, as having been evolved already in the 5th Century AD by many scholars

In the disposition of the various temples to be fixed with reference to the town, the text essentially conforms to the usages which have been repeated in the other later ones It requires the Vishnu temple to be facing into the heart of the town, while the other shrines, (among which it includes also that of Brahma and desires it to be located in the centre of the town) are as *follows* The Surya *shrine should be towards the east*, the Matru shrine towards the south, facing north which is the direction of the Bhutas whose leader is Dharmaraja (Yama), the Chandika, pitr and daitya shrines to be in the south west, pertaining to Nirruti the shrine of Varuna towards the west, the *shrine* of Nagas to wards the north-west, the *shrine* of Yakshadhipa, Skanda towards the north, the shrine of Chandesvara and the Siva Mahesa in the north east, pertaining to Isana In any event, it suggests that the Vishnu shrine should never face away from the town The Bhupariksa, Sanku lakshna chapters also follow the standard practice The 8th chapter deals, apart from other subjects like Vastumandala, also about *Marmagnāna* and *regarding* the *placement of the images in the* sanctum Throughout the text, references are made of options for either images of stone or stucco and correspondingly walls of stone or brick It implies that where the structures of the temple are of brick, stucco image in the sanctum were appropriate, while those of stone should have stone images The *Padavinyasa* is also mentioned in this chapter, pertaining to the various divinities including Siva Parjanya, Suresa, Bhaskara Satya, Yama, Hutasana, Pusan Vaivasvata, Gandharva, Sugriva, Pushpadantaka, Yadasampathi, Yakseshvara, Nagaraja, Mahadevi, Savita, Savitri, Indra, Mitra Rudra, Prajapati, *Skanda etc* This list, again, is basically in conformity with other known texts of South India In the *Prasada Samanya Laksana*, it mentions the *Garbhagraha* and the *Mukhamandapa* alone, and refers also to terms like *Sikhara*, *Sukanasa*, *Kalasa drarasakas Prakara* and it goes on to mention about the Garuda-

On the metaphysical side, it mentions the *Pindika* or the *Pitha* as representing the *Prithvi*, while the *murti* enshrined on it will be representing Gagana (Ether) or *Akasa* The text also *adumborates the various forms of the Dvadasa-Vishnu types from* Kesava to Damodara, as is found in the Agnipurana text also, excepting that it also integrates with these the *Vyuha* forms, by which Kesava, Narayana and Madhava pertain to Vasudeva Govinda, Vishnu and Madhusudana pertain to Sankarshana, Trivikrama Vamana and Sridhara pertain to Pradyumna and Hrishikesa Padmanabha and Damodara pertain to Aniruddha *It also gives values to the various consecrations of Vishnu forms* and specifies that the Varaha image use will confer the power, Narasimha image *Papanasa*, Vamana figure *mohanasa*, Parasurama figure *kamanasa* Sri Rama or Dasaratha Rama figure *Satrunasa*, Balarama figure as conferring *putra* or progeny, the Aniruddha conferring *Rupa* and *Kama* It refers to Kalki as liable to ride either a horse or a buffalo It is interesting that Buddha has been included in place of Krishna in the *Vibhava* manifestations which is in conformity with the traditions that prevailed *from or little before the 7th Century onwards and up* to the 9th 10th Century AD The earliest inscriptional reference in the south to the replacement of Krishna by Buddha is in the Adhivaraha cave temple at Mahabalipuram, of the time of Paramesvara Varman-I The text also specifies that while even Sri Rama figure could be in *Saptatāla* of the Tālamana category, the Buddha may be in *Dasatala* The *metaphysical* side also relates Vasudeva as *Gnanamaya* and *Sabdakara*, Sankarsana as Mahesvara and *Sparsara*, Pradyumna as *Tejomaya* and *Rasakara and Aniruddha as Gandhakara relating them thus to the Tanmatras* by the Panchabhutas which is a characteristic metaphysical rendition of the division of God head whether under Vaisnavism or Saivism

Among other interesting details it furnishes, mention may also be made of Navagrahas, *Mangalastakas* (or eight auspicious symbols) in which it includes the lion, bull, cobra, chamara garland lamp and Bhari Sacred trees like Asvattha, Udumbara, Nyagrodha and Plaksha *are also mentioned and a reference even* to an eighteen handed Bhairava, with one or five faces In its *description of the Seshasayi, it again conforms to the reference*

to this deity already seen in the Vaikhanasagama and found in monumental remains in various parts of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and also upper South India, already by the first quarter of the 8th Century A D It includes among the Vishnu forms, Ashtabahu or Astabhuja, which has been so well extolled by early Vaisnavaite saints (Alwars) who have sung about these gods in their hymnal in Tamil Nadu aheady by the 6th Century AD, and which claims a separate temple for this concept at Kanchipuram and which is already found in Chalukya sculpture, both in the Vaisnava cave-3 at Badami (578 AD) and the north wall of the Virupaksha temple at Pattadakkal (C745 AD) It specifies that Purusotama figure, as a representation of *Visvarupa* form, should have 20 hands and should be associated with Brahma to the proper right, Trinetra (Siva) to the proper left In the *Sila lakshana* chapter, it specifies that the image could be made of earth, wood, metal, semi precious and precious minerals and stone Then, dealing mainly with stone—made images, it states that stones taken out of Trikuta, Mandara, Nishada, Nilaparvata, Malyavat parvata, Gandhamadana, Srigiri, Srikata, Kishkendha, Mandara, Mahendra, Kailasa, Vindhya or Chitrakuta are the best, We may note that excepting for a few, these hills are all located in the Central Indian region It classifies, further, stones into Agneyi, Vayavi, Mahendri and Varuni (seemingly relatable geologically to igneous, volcanic, metamorphic and sedimentary varieties) under *bhugatasilas* Agneyi is procurable from Gurjara Vayavi from Maru, Mahendri from Madhyadesa and Varuni from Anupa Under the nature of shrines it separates them into *Yuva*, *madhya*, *bala* and *Vriddha* whatever is cool and brilliant is *Yuva*, similar but hard is *madhya*, too soft is *bala* and extremely hard is *Vriddha* It considers *Pumsila* as suitable for *pratima* and *Stri Sila* for *pitha* and here conforms to other texts It characterises *Pumsila* as having a metallic sound and dull sound, like copper, as *Strilinga* Even in the case of Visnu temples it talks mainly about *Bali* and not as a *nivedana*, as becomes a rule for about the 10th century A D, when Visnu worship gets the special usage of the *viniyoga* or distribution of the *Naivedya*, both in inscriptions and in ritual, whereas in Siva temples, offerings are considered as *bali* and *nirmalya* and are to be discarded and not to be taken by the bhaktas

The Hayasirsa text is, in any event, not later than C 800 AD and apparently it had included other traditions in the actual compilation as now found over a period between 5th century AD and the 8th It is obvious from the references to the taboo areas, as already cited at the outset, that the text had the greatest chance of having been prevalent in Central India, where we have *a circumstantial corroboration also to this effect in terms of* architectural forms and iconographical remains of great size, and virtuosity, in the Rajiva-lochana temple at Rajim, near Raipur There is no doubt that the references made in the text had integrated several aspects of Saivism in the treatment of the *Vishnu shrine categories which form its main purport, that it* belongs to a period of transition between the polytheistic stage of divinities like Vishnu and Rudra, and the truly monotheistic subsequent stages that start from the 9th Century AD, at the earliest, motivated by the great *Acharya* tradition with a galaxy of leaders *of great intellectual standing like Sankara, Yamuna, etc , before* institutionalised religion established itself firmly for the Hindu Pantheon everywhere and conventionalised religious modes into sectarian channels

Marichi Samhita and Uttaramerur

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Introduction

Uttaramerur, a fairly large size village in Chinglepet dist, Tamilnad (about 50 miles from Madras) has attracted historians on account of two important inscriptions dated in the early years of Parantaka Chola, in the first quarter of the 10th century a d, detailing the process of election to the village assemblies and giving a peep into the constitution of rural democracy, in early Tamilnad[1] It furnishes other fascinating information too, with reference to the religious life of the people, especially the role of the agamas which is the subject matter of this paper

A careful analysis of the epigraphs available in the village, reveal that Uttaramerur came into lime light in the middle of 8th century a d as a brahmin settlement, under the name *Uttarameru chaturvedi mangalam* As may be seen presently, it was a newly constituted brahmin village laid out with great care and planning The epigraphs furnish in detail the names of various temples, streets, marketplaces, irrigation canals etc and to a certain extent their location, which have been discussed by Dr Francoise Gros and the present writer, in French, in our "Uttaramerur in legend, history and monuments' (Pondichery, 1970)[2] The following names of various constituents of the village, would show that the whole village layout, was pre planned

Uttaramerur

There were twelve brahmin colonies or streets which were named after the twelve names of Mahavishnu as —

1	*Kesavac ceri*	7	*Trivikramac ceri*
2	*Narayanac ceri*	8	*Vamanac ceri*
3	*Madhavac ceri*	9	*Sridharac ceri*
4	*Govindac ceri*	10	*Hrishikesac ceri*
5	*Vishnuc ceri*	11	*Padmanabhac ceri* and
6	*Madhusudanac ceri*	12	*Damodarac ceri*

The following temples are found mostly in their original position and in some cases, referred to in inscriptions together with their location

1	*Vishnu* temple	2	*Siva* temple
3	*Subrahmanya* temple	4	*Ganesa* temple
5	*Durga temple*	6	*Saptamatâ temple*
7	*Jyeshta* temple and	8	*Sâsta* temple (Ayyanār temple)

That all these formed part of original village lay out, is seen from the references in inscriptions and also their style The irrigation canals are named after gods and goddesses and the vadis (pathways) after the titles of the ruling monarch as under,

Canals	Vadis
Pārvati vāykkāl	*Avaninārananan vadi*
Saraswati vaykkal	*Pallavanāranan vadi*
Sridevi vaykkāl	*Thirunaranan vadi*
Bhagavati vāykkāl	*Videlvidugu vadi*
Subrahmanya vāykkal	*Marpidugu vadi*
Ganapati vaykkāl	*Abhimānameru vadi*
Gavyūti vāykkal	*Uttarameru vadi*
	Vairamegha vadi
	Parameswara vadi
	Sankara vadi

Avanināranan Pallavanāranan, Videlvidugu etc were the titles of the Pallava ruler, Nandivarman II Besides the above the following names for the streets and lanes deserve notice *Mangalavithi*, *Subrahmanya nārīcam*, and *Sridevi niracam* are thus mentioned The three bazars in the village were called *Terkkilangādi* (southern bazar), *Naduvil angadi* (the central bazar) and *Vadakkil angādi* (northern bazar) Immediately to the west of the village is the big tank called in inscription, *Vairamegha tataka* after one of the titles of Nandivarman In the centre of the village is found a big (stone) base of a mandapa over which a temple to Vishnu has been built in later times, in the beginning of the 12th century, but originally it was the *Sabha mandapa* i e the village assembly hall

VĀSTU VIDYA

It may be seen from the above, that the village was originally pre-planned and meticulously laid out with sanskrit names, given to various parts of the village settlement menteoned in agamic texts, The earliest inscridtion found in the village is engraved on the base of the *sabhā mandapa* and is dated in the 24th year of Pallava ruler Nandivarman II, 757 a d[3] The village should have been brought into existence around 750 a d. The *inscription of* Nandi mentions one architect in charge of the *Sabha Mandapa* as *VĀSTUVIDYĀMAYAN NAKKAN* The term *Vāstu Vidyā* in the name, indicating the science of architecture may be noted The Sundara varadap perumal temple, located to the west of the village, retains its Pallava character, the granite base bearing several early inscriptions. The earliest dated inscription on the base is that of Pallava Dantivarman, in his 10th regnal year, 805 a d[4] There are two undated inscriptions, in Pallava grantha characters, assignable to mid 8th century a d which are of great interest to the present study They read —

1. अस्यालङ्कारमान च यथा लक्षणसंयुतम् ।
   यश्चैनं वेत्ति सकल सर्वं वास्तुविदा वरः ॥

2. एव वास्तु अभवत् महत्प्रविगतं नाम्ना च जात्यादिना
   येनास्मिन् बहुभिः यथागमविदैः ग्रामे प्रयोगान्वितैः ।
   श्रीमत्पाटकवासिना कृतधिया तक्ष्णा सदा वाग्मिना
   तेनेदं परमेश्वरेण महता श्रीवास्तुनो भास्करः ॥

i e One who comprehends the embellishments, and appropriate characteristics of this temple (*vāstu*) is indeed an expert among architects (*vāstuvid*)

"By means of which this *vāstu* (temple) is held famous as the resplendent sun among the temples (*vāstuno Bhāskara*) by the agamic scholars of this village, who were proficient in its application so was this *vāstu* constructed by Parameswara, the learned and honest, architect hailing from *Pataka* (a suburb of Kanchi)".

From the above it is abundantly clear that in Uttaramerur, village there lived agamic scholars, well versed in its application in the middle of 8th century a d and that the architects built their temples in conformity with the agamas

AGAMAS

Before dealing further with this inscription, it is necessary to note briefly the date of agamas Different views are expressed by scholars on the age of agamas[5] It would be shown in the sequence that this village was a Vaishnavite settlement The Agamavids of the village mentioned in this inscription were obviously Vaikhânasa 'âgamicas and that the agamas were well established long before this period Here the term agama is distinctly employed in the sense of Vaishnavite temple ritual texts The Kailâsanatha temple at Kanchipuram was built by the Pallava ruler, Rajasimha around 700 a d Among his many titles are found two significant ones reading *Âgama Pramānatrs* and *Âgamānusari*[6] Here the term Âgama is used obviously in the sense of treatises dealing with Saivite temple rituals The Saivite saint Jnānasambandar (640 a d) uses the word Âgama in his Tevaram hymns which are saivite texts on temple rituals The word Tantra is also used by Jnānasambandar and his elder contemporary, Appar as a synonym of Agama Thus the agamic mode of worship has taken deep root in the Tamil country long before 600 a d In Paripadal ascribed to the Sangam age the term[7] *Virinūl antanar* is used in association with temple rituals and explained as 'agamic followers' by the commentator Thus the agamic mode of worship has to be traced to the beginning of the Christian era if not earlier and its assimilation should have been gradual and fully established before 600 a d

From a study of the available agamic texts it is seen that the agamas extend to the life of the people beyond temple rituals They infact include the corporate life of the village as a whole and deal with the layout of the villages towns, capitals, port, towns etc[8] We have shown earlier that Vaikhanasa text, Marichi samhita, was followed in Sundaravarada temple, at Uttaramerur The study of Uttaramerur and Marichi samhita could be made under two subheads, a) Marichi and the village as a whole, and b) Marichi and the Sundaravarada temple

Marichi and the village Uttaramerur

The date of Marichi samhita is not known, but according to tradition it is a very early text. Unlike most of the texts which are in verse, easy to commit to memory, Marichi samhita is in prose It is not possible to state whether the entire text, as it has come down to us is original, but it is not unlikely that its major parts are of sufficient antiquity. No attempt has been made to bring out a critical edition collating various manuscripts We have to rest content with the available text[9] Marichi Samhita is essentially a vedic school and prescribes that worship according to this school should be with Vedic hymns The vaidika form is emphasised at the beginning itself, where Marichi states that the *śruti mārga* and the *mantras* should be used in the worship The devotee would reach the *Vishnoh parama pada* as described in the vedic text by following this path

श्रुत्यनुकूलेन मार्गेण चतुर्वेदोद्भवैः मन्त्रैः तम् अर्चयन्तः
श्रुतिभिः अभिहितं तत् विष्णोः परमंपदं गच्छेयुः

Marichi also cites vedic texts to point out Vishnu as the Primordeal deity

विष्णुर्वै सर्वा देवताः
अग्निर्वै देवानाम् अवमः विष्णुः परमः तदन्तरेण
सर्वा अन्या देवताः

The adoration of Vishnu is twofold, worship through fire or throug himage, the former is called the worship of the formless supreme *amurta* and the later, image worship (*mūrta*[10]) Marichi also gives the fruits of such worship in *grāmas* and *agrahāras* which are mainly brahmin villages where some perform the *agnihotra* sacrifices daily and others do not Temple worship confers on the non performers of *agnihotra* the fruits of the same and on the performers, the fruits of *sarva nishkriti homa* and *samriddhi homas* (alround prosperity) In fact they are said to bestow the benefits of *sarvakratu* and *sarvakāma*[11] sacrifices This would indicate that the attainment of the fruits of vedic sacrifices was the ultimate goal of inhabitants of the *agrahara* and *grāma* villages Thus even temple worship is meant to confer

the results of vedic sacrifices That Uttaramerur was a chaturvedi mangalam may be noted

The Marichi samhita classifies habitations into *grāma, agrahara, nagara, pattana, kharvata, kutika, senāmukha, rājdhāni* and *sibira* We are here concerned with the first two namely *grama* and *agrahāra* According to the definition, settlements of brahmins with attendents is called a *grama and an exclusive* brahmin settlement is an *agrahāra*[12] Uttaramerur is called *UR* and also *CHATURVEDIMANGALAM*, but the sanskrit text of the inscription calls it a *GRĀMA*[13] Thus it may be assumed that so far as this village was concerned, the Tamil word *ūr* was used as a synonym of *grāma* The inscription of Parantaka chola dealing with election to the village assembly also refers to this village as *grāma* which should be taken in the technical sense, used in the āgama as a settlement of brahmins with their attendants and that it is not an exclusive brahmin village The resolutions engraved on the walls of the *sabhamandapa* have posed some problems to the historians, for some of the resolutions refer to *sabhaiyom* and others to *urom* This expression created some difficulty in assessing the relationship between *sabha* and *ur* F Gros has admirably drawn our attention to this difficulty in his "Uttaramerur revisited' (K A, Nilakanta Sastri felictation volume, pages 193, 194)[14] *Applying agamic definition it is now possible to state that* Uttaramerur was mainly a brahmin village with other castes settled there to serve the brahmin inhabitants So when the resolutions were passed as *sabhaiyom* they confined to the brahmin holdings and inhabitants only, while the expression *urom* is used whenever the resolutions related to other members of the village as well This aspect needs further and seperate study except to point out here that the term when interpretted in agamic sense clears some fundamental doubts

That Uttaramerur has been a centre of vedic Vaishnavas, has been alluded to earlier The twelve brahmin colonies were named after the 12 names of Vishnu as Kesava, Nārāyana, etc Among other temples referred to are *Govardhana, Kurukshetra, Brindāvana, Purushottama, Ayodhya, Thiruvāyppādi, Thirumālirun-cholai* etc, which would show the Vaishnavite character of the

village Further one of the temples built in the village was called Irattai talisvar temple It is said to be a community consideration (*samūha prathishtai*) in the inscription[15]. Listing the communities, the inscription mentions Vaikhānasas, the donors, (*dharmis*) and other servants (*marrum paniseyyum panimakkalum* SII Vol VI 376) It confirms to the agamic definition of a *grāma* with brahmins as the main inhabitants (here the Vaikhānasas) and others as their servants and would indicate that others should serve the brahmins

On an analysis of the inscriptions this writer has prepared a conjectural layout of the village in our work "Uttaramerur in legend and history 1970". It may be seen that the *sabha mandapa* is located in the centre of the village, slightly to the north east of the central point, which is the *brahmasthāna* of the village. It is perhaps the earliest and the only surviving *sabhā mandapa* that has been noticed so far Its position is vital to the understanding of not only the role of āgamas, but also the relative position of other temples in the original village layout The '*marichi samhita*' mentions the erection of *sabhāsthāra* and locating it slightly to the north-east of the centre, the exact location where the *sabhā mandapa* is found in Uttaramerur[16] (*nibhyisānyam sabhasthānam*) In the western limit of the village is the Vairamegha tatāka The Marichi samhita also locates *tatāka* in the west of the village settlement, with high and strong embankments

वारुण्यां तटाकं त्रिदण्डसहस्रं अर्धं तदर्धं वा सेतुबन्धं
दृढतरं अन्युन्नतं अनवच्छेद्यं

The Sundara varada perumal temple is the main Vishnu temple of the village It is located in the middle of the western part and faces east Marichi samhita classifies the village layouts into 64, 81 or 256 padas (*vastu pada vinyāsa*) and stipulates that the central part of the village should be divided into four parts To the west of the *madhya sūtra*[17] of *brahma bīgha*, Vishnu temple should be erected It should have nine, six or five murthis consecrated The Sundara varada temple is located as per this prescription Marichi samhita also details

the location of other temples like Siva, Vishnu, Surya, Durga, Vighnesa, Shanmuga saptamātas Krishna, Rāghava, Matsya, Kurma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Trivikrama, Baladeva, Parasurāma and Kalki, Anantasayi, Vasudeva and Pnachvira temples[18] *It is not clear from the text, whether all these* temples must form part of the layout or the location are given for the builder to chose when he selected to build a particular temple However it is possible that except Vishnu temples and temples dedicated to his manifestations or his avatars, among which one would be built, temples to other gods like Siva must form part of the original layout of the village In Uttaramerur the Sundaravarada temple is a *navamurthi prathishtai* having nine images consecrated Besides there are also other images mentioned like Krishna and Raghava which is interesting The other Vaishnavaite temples mentioned in the text were not built in this village Among other textual temples except the temple of Surya, others were built in the village There are two temples, one to Sasta and the other to Jyeshtā which are not found in the marichi text but are found actually built in Uttaramerur Though Marichi samhita does not mention the Sāsta temple at this stage, it includes Sasta with Subrahmanya, Mātas, and Ganesa while offering bali during the *dwajarohana* ceremoney In a *grāma* where more than 1000 brahmins reside the Vishnu temple should have many images of Vishnu (five, six or nine murthis-*anekamūrthi pratishta*) *consecrated* The Sundaravarada temple is a *navamurthi pratishta* and thus confirms to Marichi That Uttaramerur had more than 1000 brahmins is attested by the signatories to the inscriptions some of whom call themselves as 1200 var, (belonging to the 1200 group[19]) Thus we find that the total layout of the village confirms to the Marichi samhita

Marichi and Sundaravarada Temple

The agamic text 'Marichi Samhita', is now being followed in the Sundaravarada temple and according to tradition from time immemorial Atleast four phases of building works to the main *prāsada are recorded in inscriptions The inner and outer* enclosures and the front mandapa are later additions that need not detain us here The earliest construction, that is the foundation,

is assignable to 750 a d The two sanskrit inscriptions refered to earlier belong to this phase At that stage the temple was called *Srivelı Vishnugraha,* the name *Srivelı* being a title of probably Nandivarnam II The granite *adhishtāna* part is undoubtedly of this age The superstructure was built of brick and mortor In the 10th cent, the temple came to be called *Kongaraiyar srikoil,* after the name of the renovator, whose name is inscribed on the base of the temple Obviously the renovation was to the brick superstructure, the exact nature of the renovation is not known However the basic plan and the elevation could not have been altered In the reign of Rajendra chola, in the 11th cent, the temple was renamed *Rajendrachola vinnagar,* probably as a result of further renovation, to the super structure Again in the reign of the Vijayanagar ruler, Krishnadevaraya, renovations were undertaken to the main *prāsāda* The stucco figures were either added or redone and the temple was painted through out. Except in the first and fourth phase of work, it is not possible to say whether Marichi samhita was followed or not In the first and the last phases, Marichi samhita has been closely followed and it is not unlikely that in the second and the third also, this text, was made use of

The Sundaravarada perumal temple is a three storeyed (*tritala prāsāda*) temple, with one *garbhagraha* in each *tala,* with standing Vishnu in the first floor, seated Vishnu in the second floor and the reclining Vishnu in the third floor[20] The three cordinal points, at the ground floor are projected with a shrine each housing a deity The shrine in the south houses the image now called Achyuta but 'Marichi', calls it Satya, the shrine at the back houses the image, now called Aniruddha, but according to Marichi Satya and the image in the north now is called Kalyana varada, but Marichi calls it Aniruddha These side shrines are approached by high steps with parapet walls, the face of which enshrine sculptures of deities As the front entrance has later additions it is not possible to say whether the steps had any parapet wall with sculpture but the Marichi says there should be Sridevi in the parapet of the steps On the parapet of the southern steps, is a seated image of Vāgdevi Saraswati The image is seated on a lotus pedestal with four arms holding *akshamāla, kundika, pustaka* and *abhayahasta* Two elephants

11 तत् विमानार्चनं सर्वक्रतुफलद सर्वकामप्रदम् इति ब्रह्मा च आशंसत् ।

12 विप्राणां समूह्यानां निवासः ग्रामः विप्रमुख्यानां अग्रहारः

13 S I I, Vol VI, 333

14 Francois Gros, Prof K A Nilakanata sastri felicitation volume, p 193-194

15 S I I Vol VI, 376
Prof K A Nilakanta sastri holds that "at Uttaramerur 'ur' was the most ancient form and that '*Sabha*' came on top of it, at the will of the king or chieftain" This view of Prof Sastriyar, needs modification for according to K A N himself "the oldest name of the village known to us is *Uttarameru chaturvedi mangalam* The form of the name suggests, that as Venkayya *pointed out, the first member of his name must be the* title like Prabhumeru, and Abhimanameru of some king whose identity still remains unknown" (K A N Studies in Cola history and administration p. 99) It has been shown that Avaninaranan, Pallavanāranan Videlvidugu Mārpidugu etc, are the titles of Nandivarman and the title *Uttarameru* is one amongst them It has also been shown that Uttaramerur is a well planned Brahmin settlement a *grama* i e the whole village was given to the Brahmins with other castes also settled there to serve the brahmins As such the view that the 'ur' existed earlier and that the 'sabha' was superimposed on that does not seem to accord with fact It was established by Nandivarman Pallava, around750 a d Prof Sastri s *following view* confirms my suggestion "The relations between the two bodies in Uttaramerur are seen though only in a rather hazy manner, from the records all of which belong to the period after Uttaramerur became a chaturvedi mangalam Almost all of them were engraved in the name of the sabha, there does not seem to have been at Uttaramerur a single instance in which the 'ur' made an independant record of its transactions This feature together with the fact that

'ur' almost ceases to be heard of in the early period of our study may raise the presumption that the 'ur' and the 'sabha' were partners in an unequal combination which in the long run worked to the disadvantage of the weaker side, That the 'ur' had in the beginning some distinct rights and previleges of its own and that it continued to exercise them actively, though in coloboration with if not under the supervision of the 'sabha' and its committee till atleast the end of tenth cent a d is amply borne out by the epigrapghs, P. 105)" Now it may be clear why a in 'grama' *Sabha* is supreme and the 'ur' is only a part of it

16 Uttaramerur, Fr. Gros and R Nagaswamy

17 तन्मध्य ब्रह्मभागं चतुर्था कृत्वा तत वायव्याशे
पश्चिमे पूर्वे वा मध्यसूत्रात् उत्तरे दक्षिणेवा देवेश विष्णं ।

18 Marichi Samhita, Ibid p 8

19 F Gros, and R Nagaswamy, Ibid, p 96

20 At my suggestion Thiru V Ganapathi sthapathi, Mamallpuram, presented an intersting paper on the technical aspects of the Uttaramerur Sundaravarada perumal temp'e construction, which has been Edited by me in "Seminar on Inscription', "An interesting inscription from Uttaramerur" V Ganapathi sthapathi Madras 1968

21 F Gros and R Nagaswamy, Ibid p 75

PRATISTHĀ

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"*Pratisthā*" refers to a cluster of ritual procedures the orthoprax performance of which enhances an object as a medium through which the pious may perceive the divine persence, the ritual procedures are aimed at *sanctifying, consecrating* or *blessing* a building, image, or liturgical implement, thereby "*establishing*" it for purposes of effective worship[1] While our main concern here is to draw evidence from the texts of the *Pāñcarātragama* corpus of tantric liturgical writings on the subject, that subject-*Pratiṣtha* is taken up in comparable works of the Visnuite, Śivaite, Śakta and other popular cultic writings where its treatment does not differ except in details, The establishment of buildings, image, and implements for effective worship is a pan Hindu phenomenon-indeed, it reflects a concern observed also within other religious communities throughout the world (albeit implemented in strikingly divergent ways) Within Hinduism, however, where "*Pratiṣtha*" is commonly done, there exists moreover a second order of tracts within the various concerned communities, and those (called variously *Samgraha**, *Prayoga**, *Vidhi** and the like) usually deal with particular aspects of *Pratisthā* rites Such secondary subject specific summaries often achieve dissemination and popularity which far

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1 Another view of *Pratisthā* procedures is that by their orthoprax performance the divine presence "establishes" itself in the building, image or implement Those who hold this view differ among themselves, however regarding whether the divine presence manifests itself as a consequence of the correctly conducted ritual or as an act of gracious condescension prompted out of concern for "those who have eyes to see" Texts can be found to support all three views alluded to here

plates, *etc*), liturgical implements (*dharpana* mirror, *chatra* or *ātapatra* umbrella, *camara*-whisk, *vyajana* fan, *pāduka* dome, *ghanta*-bell, *patākā* flag), and ornaments (*prabha* arch, *akṣamālā* rosary) as well as musical instruments, trays / funnels, spoons ladles, cooking vessels and other objects too numerous to mention Clearly, the conceit of consecration covers countless objects brought together for the purpose of worshipping God

We are concerned in this presentation primarily with *Pratisthā* procedures as they pertain to the main image of the deity housed in the central sanctuary of a Śri-vaisnava temple

Evidently, the function of the *pratisthā* procedures is to CHARGE *a* physical object *with spiritual presence, or to* CHANGE its perceived nature in such a way so that it is "seen" thenceforth after its sanctification *as essentially* different from what it was understood to be before its consecration The *cluster of rites, then, observed during pratiṣṭha* represents, as it were, a juncture, a transitional moment at which *a* structure *of stone or wood becomes a sacred shrine* when a piece of granite or bronze or plaster becomes the palpable presence *of the divine plenum manifested before our* very eyes, when the ordinary becomes extraordinary, the profane *becomes venerable What the cluster of rites celebrated* during "*pratiṣtha*" provided is a pivotal point between "*before*" and "*after*" *during which ritual "moment' what* was prepared and presented by the contractors, carpenters and *craftsmen - the takṣaka*s *and śilpin*s - is transformed rendered into THAT which mediates / stands for / represents the spiritual *rather than merely the material It is this radical transformation* that all devout believers assume happens which gives life to the vibrant practice of *pūjā*, and animates all other *pious honors* accorded images in the Hindu tradition And, it is this *achieved through procedures collectively called "pratiṣṭhā"*- which must be of interest to students of religions For, by pondering those procedures with sophistication and imagination it may be possible to move close to the heart of Hinduism, the mysterious *moment* which brings to "life" *the image which* stands so typically at the centre of the cult

Over a score of primary texts comprising the canon of the *Pancaratrāgama* take up the topic of *pratistha* General treatments are found in the cogent *Kapinjala samhita*, the unpublished *Vasiṣtha samhita*, the unusual *Purusottama samhita*, the widely disseminated *Padma samhita*, the sprawling *Visnutilaka samhita*, the venerable *Satvata samhita*, the printed *Visnu-samhita*, and the informative *Śriprasna samhita* In addition such texts as the *Hayaśirṣa saṃhita*, the *Naradīya saṃhita*, and the *Visvamitra samhita* provide speculative and reflective dimensions not found in the preceding descriptions And, the *Visvaksena samhita Parasara samhita* and *Sanatkuṃara samhita* contain treatment of certain activities not found emphasized in any of the above Precise references to chapters and verses where treatments are located in the above mentioned texts will be found on page 64 of my ANNOTATED INDEX TO SELECTED TOPICS FOUND IN THE PRINTED TEXTS OF PANCARATRAGAMA (GOS No 168 1980)[2]

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2 Only two of the Pancaratra texts containing directions for the performance of *pratiṣtha* rites have been published in English translations the *Parama saṃhita* and the *Lakṣmi Tantra* but as the sections in both these texts are abbreviated discussions these are not deemed especially useful as references Therefore they were intentionally omitted from the above list A narrative description in English of a particular *pratiṣtha rite*, observed during May in 1927 of an *utsava vigraha* is recorded with useful detail by K Rangachari in his *The Sri Vaishnava Brahman* (Madras, 1931, pp 114-134) and that was done according to Pancaratra practice Another place where English readers may turn to account of *pratiṣtha* from the perspective of a *Śri* vaisnava primary text is the English translation provided by T Goudriaan of *Kasyapa's Book of Wisdom* (The Hague 1965 pp 170 198 *et passim*) but that is a Vaikhanasa text not a Pancaratra piece By the same token, those readers limited to English *who are interested to know how pratistha was* according to ancient texts, supposed to be done may turn to translations of the *Agni Purana* (Varanasi, 1972 Vol 1 pp 215 247 *et passim*) and *Matsya Purana* (Sacred Books of the Hindus Vol 17 pt 2 pp 316-323) P V Kane *History of Dharmasastra*) 2nd edn II 889 ff and J Gonda (in studia Indologica Internationalia 1954 pp 1 37) also describe the rituals

Not all the treatments found in the Pāñcarātra texts are equally helpful. Some are short, enigmatic; others give more details. A few texts are concerned only with selected issues, omitting other concerns altogether. Several texts treat "*pratiṣṭhā*" only in passing. Most troublesome-and noteworthy is that not *all texts agree even on important details*.

With all these strictures in mind, we have selected one text to use in our discussion as a guide for presenting the procedures of "*pratiṣṭhā*". That text is the *Kapiñjala-saṃhitā* (Cuddapah *1896-printed in Telugu script*)[1] *It is chosen because it treats* the topic with reasonable clarity, focusing as does this presentation on the central image which is "established". Moreover, it conveniently summarises the totality of the "*pratiṣṭhā*"-programme into 16 discrete steps. It does so with economy of detail while yet offering occasional dilation upon difficult points. In the twelfth *adhyāya* the 16 steps enumerated as correct procedure for "*pratisthā*'" under optimum (*uttama*) conditions are as *follows, and these will serve as outline for the middle* section of this paper

1	Mandapa	9	Gehaśuddhi
2	Jalādhivāsa	10	Ratnanyāsa
3	Snapana	11	Purṇāhuti
4	Śayanādhivāsa	12	Sthāpana
5	Agnisaṃskāra	13	Prokṣana-balageha
6.	Brāhmanabhojana	14	Mantranyāsa
7	Śāntihoma	15	Parivāra
8	Sparśana	16	Dakṣinā

[1] Because it is available only in Telugu script, its contents are not easily accessible even to seasoned Sanskrit Scholars. For a résumé of this relatively late work in the Pāñcarātrāgama canon, see Smith, H Daniel, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Printed Texts of the Pāñcarātrāgama* (Baroda, GOS No 158, 1975-pp 93-106). What is found in the *Kapiñjala* text on *pratiṣṭhā* is remarkably close to what is found in the *Puruṣottama-saṃhitā*. The similarity of these to other textual treatments varies more or less in detail and *order of exposition*

1 MANDAPA

Having noted that not all texts agree in all details, nor even in their specific sequence, we must note that as part of "*pratisthā*"-procedures it is universally recommended that a special *mandapa* be provided as a place where crucial steps of the program are performed The special *mardapa*-pavilion is usually to be placed in front of the *prāsāda*-structure It is, without fail, to be supplied with *kunda*-firepits of three or four varieties in order to carry out in them the several *homas* required as the rituals proceed (Such *homa*-rites give testimony to the continuities within the āgamic traditions of the ancient, Vedic views of orthopraxy) The texts are often quite explicit in regard to the dimensions and decorations of this *maṇḍapa*-pavilion especially to be erected for the purposes of *pratiṣṭhā* (e g, *Padm* "Kr" XXV 17-73, 74 96a, 96b-112, *Isvr* XVIII. 2-84, *Spsn* VIII, 24-118 XIX: 1-23, &c) Not quite so explicit always, but certainly implicit in most of the texts, is that *preceding* this necessary, so-called ' First" s ep are such other, indispensable preliminaries as: (a) selecting personnel to supervise and carry out the entire *pratistha* schedule-a chief priest, or *ācarya*, and from 2 to 16 assistants, or *rtviks* (*Anrd* XV· 1-6, *Paus* XXXVIII 15-46 *passim*, *Mark* XII 1-14, *Vsnu* XVI, 5-8a, Spsn XVI 1-13a *et passim*), (b) determining the proper hour for the central rites to converge, hence nominating a time to start everything sufficiently in advance of that, this determination is made by consideration of appropriately auspicious months weeks, days and hours, and is done in consultation with the horoscopes of all personnel who are centrally involved (*Nrdy* XV 2b-6a, *Padm* "Kr" XXV 1b 16 *Psot* X 7-31 *Vjmt* XIV, 185-190a, *Spsn* XVIII 24-43, *Haya* ' Adi" XXXIII 5 22) (c) performing *ankurarpana* sprouting tests several days in advance of the erection of the *mandapa* as a means of determining omens, good or bad, and (d) making the significant *saṃkalpa*-statements to mark the intentional beginning of the extended program ahead

2 JALĀDHIVASA

The first day involves what may appear to be, in view of some of the subsequent central steps, some redundant rituals, specifically, the preliminary "opening the eyes" of the image,

cleaning it ritually by immersion in water, and causing it to repose horizontally on a bed of grains Yet all three of these - however much they may also stand as prefigurations of what is later *to come - are presented textually as essential preliminaries* to be done here and now These "redundant" rituals are all part and parcel, then, of the so-called *jalādhivāsa* step The *anticipatory netronmīlana rites of "opening the eyes" are here* done by the *śilpa* artisans just before the finished images (and/or building) are handed over to the temple authorities, these early "eye opening" rites are done "without mantras" as differentiated from the later act (in step 3, below) during which next day, the *acārya does it "with mantras"* *The early ritual* cleansing here and now enjoined is done first by use of the *pañcagavya* mixture, then by partial immersion for 1, 3 5, 7 or 9 nights in water This immersion in water, from which this so called second "step' gets its name, is ideally done in living waters, that is to say, in a tank lake, reservoir river or some other large body of water And, while the texts say the "soak' may be done for 1, 3, 5, 7 or 9 nights," it is in fact most *often done for the shortest of these periods, indeed, if we refer* to Rangachari on this ma ter (p 123), he described a *pratistha* program performed over 50 years ago in which *jaladhivasa* did not take even over night, but was quite acceptably accomplished by immersing the image for the length of only one *muhurtim* (a little over *45 minutes*) or less *Once this immersion has been* done, the image is made to recline horizontally on a bed of grains Sometimes this is done - also - before the immersion, in either case, this is referred to as "*dhānyādhivāsa*" As already noted, it foreshadows the later "rest period" afforded *the image* when it is once again, next *day*, placed recumbent on a bed of grains (see "step" 4, below) It should be repeated that all these constituent activities here enjoined along with others - are presented in the texts in terms of making all things ready for what is subsequently to happen, in fact, these things *are done* at approximately *the same time that the entire temple* precincts are "purified" for what is yet to occur (itself an act which is reiterated in "step" 9, below)

3 SNAPANA

Once all those preliminary purifications have been accomplished - whether taken care of in a short period only, or overnight, or in the leisurely course of several days - the image is once again to be found in the special *mandapa*-pavilion In most cases, this will be on the morning of the second day There it is readied for the next major "step" 3, in our list, *snapana* In this phase of *pratiṣṭhā*, several pots are filled with liquids These liquids include milk, curds, ghee, honey and *pañcagavya*, along with pots of water variously containing turmeric, sandal, grains, rice, fruits, roots, gems, metals and "heat" (that is to say, one pot contains heated water) These liquid filled pots are, in turn, identified with aspects of the deity - Keśava, Nārāyana, Mādhava, Govinda, Visnu, Madhusūdhana and/or others Earths, dirt, and muds are also gathered from various places. These as well as the waters are regarded as having special cleansing capabilities - and all of these will imminently be used in the ritual bath, *snapana*, which is central to this third "step" in a *pratiṣṭha*-program But before the central act here is done the texts make clear that "*Vastupūjā*" is to be done - an undertaking rich in folk traditions and replete with satellite celebrations - the effect of which, here, is to mark a "before"/"after" turning point in the *pratiṣṭhā*-program Also prior to the decanting of the liquid filled pots is a second *netronmīlana* rite by virtue of which the *ācārya*, by using effective *mantra* power, enables the image to "see" by symbolically "opening the eyes" The central *snapana*, too, is accompanied by precisely-targeted mantras which are all the while uttered by the *ācārya*, as he touches and cleanses various parts of the image's body (*vide* for examples such texts as *Padm* "kr" XXVI (upto 59), XXVII 19ff, 30b-68, *Isvr* XVIII 168-339a, and see also Rangachari, 125-127, 127ff)

4 ŚAYANĀDHIVĀSA

Next, the duly-annointed image is made to recline (once more) on a bed of grains and cloths or skins These are all carefully specified in the texts The bed of grains is also strewn with flower blossoms and *darbha* stalks This fourth

that these activities must be taken quite seriously not only as prefigurations of what is to be done at the close of the entire program later but as discrete rituals in their own right But the main part of *pratiṣṭhā* estblishment is yet to come

8 SPARŚANA

That is made evident when an even more elaborate cycle of *homas* is undertaken For the commencement of this crucial core of the *pratiṣṭhā*-program, the image is raised from its reclining position That image is then offered some *payasa*-gruel *Bali* offerings are made, whereupon follows an elaborate sequence of acts during which the *ācārya*, seated or standing in front of the image, touches its various parts At each contact point he anoints the image with one of the liquids from the pots earlier made ready As he does so, he charges that spot to be the entering place into the image of *jīva, prakṛti, buddhi, ahankāra, mānasa, saptatanmātra,* and so forth This is the central significance of *sparśana*, 'touching, from which this "step" gets its name

"step" may or may not be actualized by the provision of a miniature, four-poster cot or bed, the more vividly to reiterate the symbolism of *sayanādhivāsa* as it refers to the recumbent position of the deity when it is honored by *pujā*, utilizing sandalpaste and flowers, and covered over with a cloth (see Smith, *Annotated Index* .., p 109, for various textual citations)

5 AGNISAMSKARA

The fifth "step" still on the second day, involves a significant series of fire rituals Hence the name alluding to the purifications effected thereby, *agnisamskara* The aim here is to summon various mundane powers and cosmic presences All this takes place in the specially-constructed *mandapa*, utilizing its various firepits Prior to the actual kindling of the sacred flames *in the respective firepits, various sounds are made* manifest Stories and stotras are recited, traditional songs are sung, drums and horns are played, chants from the Rik, Yajus, Saman and Atharva Vedas are directed respectively to the East, South, West and North Those directions are further, identified as "doorways," and they, in turn, are related to specific woods from trees such as pipal, udambara banyan and plaksha which serve to conjure up rich, mythic associations of plant lore Of course, the deities of the directions are invoked Once again, pots of liquids are prepared and presences are invoked into them - *mūrti* forms of the Lord Viṣnu himself, that deity's Divine Weapons his celestial companions, the 25 *tattvas*, the mystic *astamangalas*, and other profound and transcendent powers The sacred fires will by now have been kindled and *homa* libations characterize much of what is observed during this phase of the *pratiṣṭhā* program

6 SANTIHOMA 7 BRĀHMANABHOJANA

What happens now seems also to prefigure other, later and more elaborate events of an analogous nature "*Brāhmana-bhojana*" refers to a feast to be given in honor of the participants in the *pratiṣṭhā* rites upto this point, and either before or after it "*Śāntihoma*," a cycle of pacification rites, is performed by the *ṛtvik* assistants using honey, milk, curd and ghee while reciting the "*Puruṣasūkta*" As a number of *Pāñcarātrāgama* texts enjoin these two "steps" at this juncture, it would appear

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Here it is unavoidable to construe *sparśana* as an act which also conveys by doing it something intimately linked with "feeling" itself, that process by which one reaches out, touches something and is, in turn, touched by it In this phase of the ritual known as "*sparśana*' is reflected, then, an exchange by which that which is beyond our mediating senses is made immediately tangible And that appears to be what the sum-total of the *pratiṣṭha* procedures is all about, as it were to make the spiritual manifest, to bring the transcendent to hand, to charge the subtle to become gross, to change the ineffable into the concrete It is at this point in the procedures that "image' is transmuted to "icon," that is to say, when the material stuff fashioned by the *śilpins* in transformed into the wondrous, mysterious medium through which the divine is disclosed to those of faith

To be sure, there is—ritually speaking—more to it than this ' step" 8 also involves invoking into the image the "breaths"—*prāna* / *apāna* / *vyāna* / *udāna* / *samāna* / and the like—belonging to the living presence which has, sincethe beginning

of the entire temple-preparation enterprise, been kept resident in the *bālabimba* For that, *pratisārabandha* must be performed, and further fire offerings which effect the transfer into the image of other presences, powers and potentialities are done by the *ācārya* through both physical and mental acts of *nyāsa* accompanied by *homas* The overall effect is to imbue the image with the vibrancy of life (*Vṣnu* XVII 1-81a In some texts the transfusion into the image of "life" is regularly referred to as "*prāna pratistha*") So potent and palpable are those powers that the image cannot thereafter be left unattended Consequently, the *ācārya*, the patron (*yajamāna*), and some others are enjoined to spend the night in the *mandapa* with the icon

The remaining "steps" set forth in the *Kapiñjala-saṃhitā* list all transpire on what is normally the third, or final, day of a typical program of *pratiṣṭhā*

9 GEHAŚUDDHI

Gehaśuddhi refers to the acts of purifying the precincts of the temple which was built to house the image, these efforts are to make the place pure for the rituals which remain to be performed there They are attended to early in the morning after the *ācārya* and the *yajamāna* have risen and have determined that there was nothing inauspicious in what they each dreamed to demand their abandonment of the entire enterprise at this penultimate point The method of *gehaśuddhi* requires the use of various *mantras* and sprinklings of water sanctified for the purpose Once those things have been done attention turns specifically to the *sanctum sanctorum* where the image will soon be "established" permanently

10 RATNANYĀSA

The pedestal upon which the image will be fastened in the *sanctum sanctorum* has long since been fashioned and delivered by the artisans to the temple authorities, cleansed by the latter and, just the night before, honored with worship and a special cloth cover Most texts are careful to specify that the stone which was originally selected for fashioning the pedestal (see Smith, *Annotated Index* , pp 59f) is considered neither "male" nor "female," but instead "neuter " The "*ratnanyāsa*" act by which "step" 10 is known requires that a small

depression be excavated either atop the pedestal or in the ground over which the pedestal will be placed That cavity is lined with what are described as "female" stones Then in that hollow is placed, as it were, male "seeds" in the form of precious items, among them the nine precious gems (*ratna*) This insemination rite is a clear analogue to the similarly symbolic acts which precede and culminate the construction of a temple, the so called *prathamestakā* and *mūrdheṣṭakā* rites (see Smith, *ibid*, pp 65, 88, also 30f)

As in the preliminaries to *prathamestakā* rites, so also here in the program of *pratisthā*, "*vāstupūjā*" must be performed (once again) before the precious elements are deposited into the cavity designed to contain them *Homas* insure the potency of this gem burial part of the *pratisthā* procedures

11 PŪRNĀHUTI

"*Pūrnāhuti*" refers to the culminating *homa* libations next made Once again locale is the especially constructed *mandapa*-pavilion where special *kuṇḍa*-firepits have been provided The purpose of the fire-offerings here enjoined is to atone for any mistakes made up till now in the efforts to bring god before his devotees *It is a deliberate effort to make all things right just* before the Icon is finally "fixed" in the place where the faithful will thereafter repair to behold the divine personality during *darśana*

12 STHĀPANA

"*Sthāpana*" refers to the point in the *pratiṣṭha* program toward which all has so far been leading It occurs at the precise moment which, long before, had been set by the astrologers (see 1-b, above) It involves taking the Icon from the *mandapa* pavilion into the *sanctum sanctorum* and there raising it on to its pedestal, cementing it into place all the while intoning significant *mantras* The fixing of the icon, wherein is simultaneously established an axis of cosmic and mundane invisible forces, is a central act of "*pratiṣṭhā*" Once done, what remains to do is to take further ritual precautions which will ensure that *the powers presences, and potentialities residing in the icon* infuse, sanctify, and give character to the surrounding structure

13 PROKṢANA—BĀLAGEHA

The closing ritual "steps" in the schedule, then wind down the *pratisthā*-program Some of these may require elaborate and demanding acts, and may even in some cases be time-consuming Usually, however what remains is done with dispatch on the third and final day of the celebrations-though occasionally with considerable *eclat* "*Prokṣana balageha*" requires the *ācārya* to repair to the *bālālaya* (temple in miniature) constructed at the commencement of the temple building enterprise and there if he had not already done so earlier in "step" 5 above retrieve the *kumbha* pot containing the "power of the *balabimba*, and transfer that "power" to the image now standing in the central sanctuary by means of pouring the contents of the *kumbha* pot over it Some of the liquid must be reserved, however to use in disseminating that same holy "power" throughout the temple precincts by sprinkling it at appropriate places and passageways throughout the structure

14 MANTRANYĀSA

Here the *ācārya* uses the so called "*mūla*" *mantra* (= *dvadaśākṣara or aṣṭakṣara*) to secure the "power" and "presence" and "potency" of the divine in the image and in the sacred structure which surrounds it

15 PARIVĀRA

In a very real sense what is done now is merely elaboration of what was mentioned as part of "step" 13, above Reserve liquid from the *kumbha* used to drench the central icon and to sanctify the *vimāna* surrounding it is now used to "establish" all the peripheral *parivāradevatā* divinities-including the goddess consorts Śrī and Bhū wherever they are to be worshipped in the various *āvaraṇa*-enclosures of the temple compound

16 DAKṢINĀ

This last "step" refers, of course to the honoraria given to the *ācārya*, the *ṛtviks*, and to all other personnel who will have participated in the *pratiṣṭhā*-program It is an indispensable part of this cluster of rites just as it has been for untold generations an indispensable part of all ritual performances among the orthoprax In some texts the intimation is made

that a proper *dakṣinā* is what validates the entire *pratiṣṭhā*-program And in two or three texts the *dakṣina* specified is remarkably generous—which merely lends confirmation to the importance attached to the *pratistha* procedures generally

While some of the *Pāñcarātrāgama* texts are silent on the matter, not a few of them enjoin that immediately upon the conclusion of the *pratiṣṭhā*-program the temple be closed for three days, the initiation of *nityārcana* being there recommended to commence only on the fourth day after *pratiṣṭhā* has been concluded This may reflect in a few cases the bridal symbolism stressed by those texts (*e g* the *Bhāradvāja samhitā* extant only in manuscript I outlined by Smith in *Descriptive Bibliography* , pp 320ff , esp 323 see also *Vilk* VII 584 603 also *Pdma* ' kr ' XXX *passim cf*, *Vksn* XVIII I 38) as the Lord and his consort(s) are married during the culminating course of the consecration Hence the three day hiatus there may be construed to be analogous to the *triratravrata* of ancient *smrti* texts This bridal symbolism is absent however from many other texts I, where the three day closure is explained as a courtesy, as it were to the *devas ṛsiṣ, pitṛs jivas* and other celestials to worship the Lord with undisturbed priority of place over human devotees (see for example *Pdma* ' kr ' XXVIII 38bff)

17 SOME REFLECTIONS

The task of determining which are the critical, most crucial, ' steps ' of the 16 just reviewed requires field observation and critical discernment Then dealing with the *pratiṣṭhā* phenomenon as has been done here, from only a textual point of view and then using antique *saṃhitas* which the active *ācāryas* themselves today seem to eschew in favour of their own more personalized and convenient collections of rules-it is necessary to exercise caution before coming to conclusions Yet the cononical texts do speak forth, if one is willing to listen to the lessons they deliver There are at least three things which stand out from a reading of the primary Pancaratra texts on the subject of *pratiṣṭhā* one of which is easily deducted from the evidence put forth, the other two of which are inducted from the evidence withheld in the texts

First, while comparisons have yet to be made with texts from other Hindu tantric traditions to see whether or not *pratiṣṭhā* practices are essentially the same among them despite other sectarian differences, the testimony of the *Pañcarātrāgama* texts is fairly unambiguous Despite minor divergences in specifics and even sometimes in sequence, the same major activities are recommended repeatedly from treatment to treatment There seems to be an essential agreement within the Pañcarātra community of what constitutes "establishment" of an object to make it fit for worship But there are two important considerations concerning which we get precious little (if any) help from the primary *Pañcarātrāgama* texts

The second impression received from a reading of the texts, then, is that there is no indication in them of the degree to which current practice of *pratiṣṭhā* in the contemporary Pañcaratrika cult conforms to or diverges from the norms laid down in the *āgama* texts The *ācāryas* who specialize in *pratiṣṭhā* today appear to favour the guidelines laid down by their fathers or colleagues rather than those attributed to the ancient sages However else this current fact of life is valued a careful reading of the Pañcaratra texts compels admission that the prescriptions given there do *not* contain sufficient specifics to "do' *pratiṣṭhā* ! This leads to the reflection that ' perhaps the *āgama* texts were never intended to serve as actual guides That, in turn, leads to the query, what then was the purpose and intention of the texts in the matter of *pratiṣṭhā ?* The scope of this paper does not allow pursuit of that intriguing question

The third lesson learned from the texts is that they give little explicit guidance in regard to the "meaning of the *pratiṣṭhā* rites Clearly, they are laden with mystery But what the mystery "means," and how to probe it is left unsaid It is in regard to the possibility of probing the 'meaning' of the *pratiṣṭhā* rites to which the following concluding section turns

18 PROBING THE "MEANING' OF *PRATIṢṬHĀ*

The matter of "meaning' must be an occasion for speculation, for the texts remain tantalizingly silent on the *symbolism* of the *pratiṣṭhā*-rites and their constituent elements As it had earlier been stated that "by pondering those

procedures with sophistication and imagination it may be possible to move close to the heart of Hinduism ," it is now appropriate to initiate albeit tentatively-that pondering on paper And, perhaps the best place to begin a quest for "meaning" may be simply to look seriously at some of the elements used in the rites To do so will eventuate in some (perhaps) simple minded lists And while this basic approach to analyze constituent elements used in *pratistha*-rites by no means carries with it a claim to exhaust the possibilities of "meaning" to be found in the texts, it does at least point in the direction of one method by which the rites may be approached using both sophistication and imagination " At the very best, what follows may suggest to sensitive readers yet other avenues of approach for analysis of a cluster of rites which remains, upto now, mysterious and enigmatic

What are some of the elements that are used in *pratiṣṭha* rites ? For starters recall the bed of grains Think also of the various seeds specified for use at various junctures And flowers Also, consider the specifications of woods used for mounting and decorating doorways, to say nothing of various stalks of plants and grasses to be gathered Remember further the shoots, and roots, and scents which turn up time and again in the paraphernalia required for proper *pratiṣṭha* The items do not accrue randomly they all represent substances coming from the *sthāvara*, or stationary, world of plants Or recall again the bed of grains what is specified for use to separate one layer from another ? Skins—of antelopes, sometimes of tigers And, the image reclining atop it is to be covered with a cloth—made of wool, the source of which is a sheep To this add the ablutions and cleansing the bathing and the touching done with substances like milk, ghee, curds, *pañcagavya* all products of the cow And honey—which comes from bees All of these including even the conch of Lord Visnu and other shells and pearls and the like, are substances which represent the *jangama* or moving, world of animals Or, yet again recall the various gems deposited during "*ratnanyāsa*", and the muds gathered for cleansing purposes, the minerals recommended here and there, the coins and other metals objects buried or distributed All of these (including even the arcane *as'amangala* items what

and richly allusive cluster of rituals The allusions which have been brought to the surface in the preceding paragraphs of probing for "meaning" have suggested that at least Sāmkhya and other ancient philosophies inform the symbolism seen in "*pratiṣṭhā*" according to *Pañcarātrāgama* texts And there, those allusions have been codified in prescribed rituals and are forever preserved in the liturgies for those who have eyes to see

Yet the pious worshipper may not "see" anything at all of what has been here suggested As he beholds the result of the *pratiṣṭhā* process, he has *darsana* of something much more immediate, much more credible Before him now stands GOD, "established" in his sanctuary in all his power and glory in his *arcāvatāra* mode of manifestation And it is to this presence that the man of faith repairs for worship, renewal praise, prayer and thanksgiving

MAHĀSAMPROKṢAṆA 1981

Āgama and Actuality in a Contemporary Temple Renovational

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Change is nowhere more apparent in India then in her skylines High rise office and apartment buildings and the stacks of new industrial complexes are erupting in the cities and towns and through the countryside, complicating and transforming the horizons In South India, new public and private structures are soaring to contest the centuries old pre eminence of Hindu temple gopuras across the landscape. But the challenges of these secular vimānas are not unanswered New temples are rising [2] Some great entrance towers--such as those at Cidambaram's Naṭarājasvami Temple just now and those of the Mīnākṣisundaresvara Temple only a couple of decades ago--have emerged from cocoons of thatch and poles newly resplendent And the great "rāya gopura" at the Srirangam Ranganatha Temple, long merely a massive and dormant stone foundation mixed monument to piety and hubris--is stirring, ascending possibly to the height long ago projected by its designers

Of course, it is not entirely clear what sorts of meaningful change are being evidenced or heralded by these building activities New construction and renovation of temples may not signal change at all but rather witness the healthy persistence of traditions uniquely associated with South India's cultural heritage The paints and plasters and cements may be the yield of 20th century technology, the mode of their employment the design followed, and the aspirations realized may be old beyond easy reckoning [3]

In this essay (a preliminary report on work in progress and not a finished statement) I take a recent Hindu temple reconsecration (*mahasamprokṣana*)[4] as an occasion to ask some basic questions about tradition (*agama*) and, therefore, also

about change I focus on inherently interesting ceremonies the cluster of ritual acts that constitute *pratiṣṭhā* "effective, religious establishment (or re-establishment) of images and temple structures" Through these acts brick and stone and plaster and metal and wood and paint, hitherto merely elements skillfully worked by craftsmen, are enlivened They become the present, living divinity for devotees

My paper has three parts First, I take about the *VimānārcanaKalpa* (VAK), "Procedure for religious service in temples," the traditional manual that was the authoritative text for this *pratiṣṭhā* I try to place this work in the context of the Vaikhanasa school of ritual practice that it represents, and I share some of my thinking about what *āgama* s are and how to go about understanding them Second, I examine the directives for *pratiṣṭha* set forth in the VAK Eventually, it would be desirable to give an annotated translation of these chapters based on a critically edited text, for now, however, the reader must be content with an outline of the principal constituent acts in *pratiṣṭha* (provided conveniently enough, in the VAK itself [an interpolation ?] as a sequential, topical summary) [5] Third, I describe briefly the *mahasamprokṣana* I observed a few months ago in a village in Southern Tamil Nadu In this final section, I relate the actual programme to the text and also try to convey something of the atmosphere of the performances

Grappling with the Agama

Attributed to Marici, one of four great sages held by the Vaikanasa tradition to have been the immediate disciples of Vikhanas, eponymous founder-guru of the community [6] the VAK is the most comprehensive (and arguably the oldest) of the extant Vaikhānasa *saṃhitā* s and the one most frequently cited as authoritative by Vaikhanasarcakas with whom I have worked These *samhitā* s, of course are the texts commonly and rather loosely referred to as "agamas," collections of ritual directives largely dealing with services in temples Vaikhānasas themselves refer to these works as *bhagavacchastra* or *mahaśastra*, usage at one with their insistence on the continuity between these *saṃhita* s and the *Vaikhānasakalpasūtra* -s, these latter expressly being called *prathamapradhana* in the traditional enumeration of the texts [7]

The VAK (or *Marīcisamhitā*) holds few structural surprises for readers familiar with other so called āgama texts [8] Asked by rsis what god (*deva*) to worship in what manner and with what *mantra* s and what the result achieved will be, the magisterial Marīci responds that Nārayana/Visnu should be attended worship-fully in a way conformable to *śruti* and with mantras from the four vedas [9] The result, he avers, will be the attainment of Visnu's highest place, beyond the ken of the devas Worship in temples, Marīci declares, gives the fruit of the *agnihotra* to those who do not keep the sacred, household fire, and, for those who do, it grants complete expiation of misperformances while also bestowing the greatest prosperity

In the course of the many chapters succeeding this initial exchange, Marīci holds forth in monologue on the technical details of selecting the site for the *vimāna* (shrine, temple), constructing it, fabricating images, installing and consecrating them, and conducting both the daily performances in service of the manifest, enshrined divinity (*nityārcana*) and the special--periodic or occasioned festival performances (*utsava*) These matters occupy the bulk of the work Following them are chapters dealing with corrective measures to be taken in the event of misperformances in the aforegoing or on the occasion of any one of a variety of accidents These measures are *prāyaścitta* s, explained in the VAK as "prevention (or annulment) of the occurrence of *doṣa* (flaw, fault)' (VAK, *patala* [chapter] 61) and translateable according to context as preventative" or ' remedy ' The concluding chapters touch briefly on matters subsumable under the headings of *jnāna* and *yoga*, two of the four topics (the others being *kriyā* and *caryā*) that are, theoretically at least, obligatory subjects of the *tantra* [10]

Before turning, in the next section, to the chapters on *pratiṣṭhā* in the VAK, it is appropria e to make clear some of my understanding of just what kind of text this *saṃhitā* is, how it should be approached, and in what sense it is to be taken as an "authority"—by which I mean, in particular, what I think we should interpret an *arcaka* to mean when he asserts that this text (or, for that matter, any *āgama* text) is authoritative for him

I have called the VAK a handbook or manual, and so, in an important sense, it is It tells what one should do, how,

and in what sequence As such, it is a guide to performance hence, structurally, it is like a variety of "how to do it" manuals such as cookbooks But the analogy is pushed only *at the risk of serious misunderstanding—not to mention* disappointment It is soon obvious to the reader of the VAK that, despite its substantial and frequently tedious detail, it does not fully discuss the procedures it prescribes That is it would not be possible to perform correctly and completely the acts *enjoined in the samhitā if one were to rely solely on it* The VAK—and other *saṃhitā*-s like it—presuppose a considerable amount of background on the part of their readers or auditors And this, of course is itself another way of reminding us that these are "school" texts or what today, might be called "in house" documents They are not composed to provide others with complete details of performances nor to introduce outsiders to the rituals Rather, they are written for functioning priests and serve them as compendious references sanctions, and models more than as exhaustive procedural guides [11]

Not only are we bound to be disappointed if we expect a text like the VAK to be exhaustive, we are also going to get into trouble if we neglect the orientations and preoccupations of the writer compilers of such texts The architect, the builder, and the prospective occupant of a house all may be directly concerned with the construction of one and the same edifice, and all three would be well advised to share some basic understandings about such matters as materials Also it is helpful that each of the three be conversant with the perspectives of the others Moreover, the same individual may, in turn, be *architect, builder, and occupant of a single building But it* remains true that *as* architect or *as* builder or *as* occupant one sees things differently and, in fact, probably sees different things

The intertwining of architecture and religious ritual is not to be gainsaid, and I am far from intending to visit contemporary notions of compartmentalized professionalism on the *śāstrakāra*s though their domains were no doubt bound by certain caste and other limiters The *arcaka* could have been a *śilpin* and the *śilpin* an *arcaka* [8] But we chance some serious misunder-

standings if we simply assume from the start that *arcaka* and *silpin* are interchangeable A ritual specialist, the author of the VAK views all the several actions in building and consecrating a temple and its images as inter linked moments in a single, multiformed ritual act And this is to stress once again that texts like the VAK are written by priests for priests [13]

And this brings us round to the question of what an *arcaka* means when he says that he acts on the authority of a given *samhita* "We are following the *Maricisamhita* in this," I have been assured frequently For one who observes such a performance and also knows the text, however, there is often a problem what is done is both more than and less than what the text sets forth

What now? That texts like the VAK do not detail all the particulars of ritual action gives a partial explanation—serviceable for accounting for some kinds of disparities between text and performance So, to consider the VAK as authoritative is not to take the words of the text as the exclusive and exhaustive authority, indeed, it is readily seen that this could not be the case The author—compiler assumes a certain amount of commonly understood lore and practice—traditional "givens," as it were—that need no repeating or confirmation in the *samhita* -

But what about apparent short—cuts and omissions? Commonly, the *arcaka* s response is that the fuller performance prescribed in the text would be executed if circumstances permitted That is the text is authoritative in telling what ought to be done, and one does as much as one can of what ought to be done within the constraints of available resources It may be recalled here that the VAK is quite liberal in its flexibility concerning times of performances, length and elaborateness of ceremonies, and so on. It will say, for example, that certain rites may take place indifferently on any one of a number of days It will sanction differing durations for certain ceremonies [14] It will classify acceptable options as *uttama, madhyama, adhama* ("best, next best, least desirable") or—even more finely—as *uttamottama, madhyamottama* and on down the line to

adhamadhama And it frequently offers options to meet contingencies, simply declaring *asaktascet* ("if one is unable ")

The VAK and similar texts do not create traditions They are expressions of traditions, and, as detailed as their discussions of ritual action may be, they do not precisely encapsulate or epitomize it. Today s practising *arcaka*-s, too, are exponents of the tradition and not simply creatures of a text. Thus, they will revere and count authoritative a work like the VAK without necessarily having studied it first-hand In fact, it is common that an *arcaka*'s direct access to the information contained in both *samhita*-s and *sūtra* s will be through *prayoga* s ("applications") and *paddhati* s (guides) [15] These may be written (and therefore available in manuscript or in printed form), but very often they exist as the erudition of teachers who share their learning orally and by example [16] There have been and still are vidvāns whose knowledge of such sources as the VAK is profound By virtue of that and their own considerable practical experience, they will be sought out for counsel and assistance by other *arcaka*-s when circumstances seem to warrant it [17] And it cannot be denied that some *arcaka* s are not well-versed in tradition But we must not be too quick to assume that where the VAK and the contemporary practitioner diverge on the details of any particular ritual we are witnessing an instance of the decline in the strength and integrity of tradition Nor should we assume that the VAK is an indisputably accurate guide to exactly how rituals were conducted at any time in the past

Pratiṣṭhā according to the Vimānārcanakalpa

Strictly considered, all renovating or refurbishing of temples and images falls under the heading of *prāyascitta* remedial acts to be performed on the occasion of perceiving some flaw in order to prevent incurring *doṣa* The unhappy consequences of failing to take prompt, corrective action are occasionally specified in the text, usually in simple yet ominous statements to the effect that king and kingdom will perish or that all the hopes and aspirations of the individuals involved will be dashed

Although the VAK merely directs that the items be refabricated and installed "as previously detailed'—thereby

referring the reader to earlier discussions in the work—remembering that these acts are embedded in a *prayascitta* when done at the time of a renovation explains the prominence of the *mahaśāntihoma* during the critical days of the *mahāsamproksana* ceremonies This *homa*—the *sarvadosopaśamana*, according to the VAK, that is, "that which appeases all *doṣa* s"—is not assigned a particularly prominent place by the text when it is a question of installing new temples and images [18]

Directives to *pratiṣtha* in the VAK are for the most part clustered in chapters 27 through 40 inclusive It is not perfectly neat and tidy, however A few discussions of *pratiṣthā* are scattered in later chapters though they do not seem to add any new information nor do they clarify any of the earlier presentation Further, the 14 chapters specifically dealing with *pratiṣthā* are not all equally important in coming to understand the essential structure of the ceremonies Critical in that connection are chapters 27 through 33, to which should be added chapter 26 which gives *ankurarpana vidhi*, "instruction on placing the sprouts," the planting ceremony that is declared to be the absolutely necessary first ritual of the several that effect the *pratiṣtha* [19]

Helpfully, the VAK lists in chapter 33 the 25 moments or ritual ceremonies that collectively make up the full *pratiṣtha* (here called a *yajña* by Marici) Moreover, it is explicitly stated that the order of these 25 events ought not to be tampered with *iti kramena / eteṣaṃ viparyasaṃ na kurayet* "so [the preceding rituals are to be conducted] in order one should not change them around." Here is a translation of this list (substituting numbers for the ordinals in the text)

1 Planting the sprouts (*ankurārpana*),

2 Assembling the apparatus (*saṃbharaharana*)

3 Opening the eyes (of the image [*bimba*]) (*akṣyunmocana*),

4 Cleaning the image (*bimbaśuddhi*),

5 Lighting the fire (by friction) (*agnimathana*)

6 Purifying the site (*vastuśuddhi*),

7 Bringing the fire (*agnipranayana*)

8 Homage to the pots (of water and) concentrated meditation (*kumbhapūjadhyana*),

9 Setting up the vessels, (tying) the bracelet, and (preparing) the bed for (the god s) rest (*kalaśasth ipanaṃ pratisaram śayanāstaranam ca*),

10 Consecrating the bed (*śayanādhivasana*),

11 Recitation of Veda (and) devotional service to all the gods (*vedadhyayanam sarvadevarcana*),

12 Singing of the hotṛ-priest, etc (*hautraśamsanādi*)

13 Major fire offering (*pradhanahoma*)

14 Waking the god (and) bathing (him) (*devasyotth ipanam snāna*)

15 Depositing the jewels (*ratnanyasa*),

16 Giving the fee (to the *ācarya*, etc, and) propitiating the fire (*dakṣinadanam agnisamgrahana*),

17 Circumambulating the temple (*sadmapradakṣiṇa*)

18 Establishing the moveable and immoveable (images [that is, the kautukabera and the dhruvabera], and) the invitation (of the god) into both (*calācalasthāpanaṃ tayor avāhana*),

19 Inviting the other gods (*anyodevānīm avāhana*),

20 Salutation (*punyāha*)

21 Devotional service (*devārcana*),

22 Feeding brahmins (and) honoring Vaiṣṇavas (*brahmaṇa-bhojanam vaiṣnavapūjana*),

23 Festival (*utsava*)

24 (Ritual) bathing (*snāpana*),

25 The grand oblation (*mahāhavirnivedana*),

While there is insufficient space here to analyze fully each of those stages, it will be possible to flesh out the skeletal outline somewhat by giving a brief summary of the principal acts involved And, along the way, attention can be drawn to a few obscurities in the text s account By way of anticipating,

it can be noted that although the structure of the proceedings is relatively straightforward and easy to follow, the "central mystery", if I may so term it—namely, the transformation of an artwork into a *mūrti*—remains veiled. That is, it is not altogether clear precisely at what point in the ceremonies the image becomes divinity incarnate.[20] That in turn, has some importance for understanding the kinds of responses given by *arcaka* s today when they are asked which of the ritual acts is decisive for the *pratiṣṭhā*.

Of the 25 stages in the VAK's outline of *pratiṣṭha* rituals, only the first 21 are significant, the final four being merely post-*pratiṣṭhā* celebrations as the text makes clear by ignoring them when discussing the benefits to be gained by individuals who properly conduct the installation ceremonies. Although it may also appear to be a stage apart from the *pratiṣṭhā*, the *devārcana* (number 21) is in fact the climax, for the objective of the ceremonies is *arcana* and the *pratiṣṭhā* is incomplete without it. *Ankurārpaṇa*, too, is apparently separate from the *pratiṣṭha* strictly considered, but it is the indispensable propaedeutics here just as it is for festival performance.[21]

In the same way as there are more or less inconsequential items in the VAK's summary so there are some actions that are crucially important but are not mentioned at all. Principal among these are choosing the correct time for the *pratiṣṭhā* and selecting the appropriately qualified officiants.[22] These two topics are considered in some detail at the beginning of chapter 27 of the VAK.

The rest of chapter 27 deals with *akṣyunmocana* the 'opening of the eyes' the third step in the outline and the first key ritual in *pratiṣṭhā*. While this ceremony is familiar to many, the commonly held understanding that it is through this ritual that the image ceases to be simply a material product of the craftsman and 'becomes' the god cannot be sustained by the text. According to the VAK, there are two 'eye opening' ceremonies. The first is performed by the *śilpin* (artist-craftsman) without mantras (*amantraka*), which is to say that he completes the image in a material sense by delineating the eyes.[23] Not itself a ritual act from the VAK's perspective, it seems to be

mentioned merely to indicate when to perfrom the *samantraka* ritual the opening of the eyes "with mantras"

Preliminary to the *samantrakakṣyunmocana* nine precious stones are deposited on a pedestal (*pītha*) to the accompaniment of individual *mantra* s from the *Vaikhānasamantraprasna* [24] This *ratnanyāsa* ("depositing of jewels) is a distinct ceremony from that mentioned as number 15 in the VAK s outline, though the gods addressed (Brahma and the eight world protectors) and the *mantra* s employed are the same After the jewels are placed the *śilpin* is to be summoned again to fix the image securely to the pedestal And now the ritual eye opening commences

In a decorated pavilion (*mandapa*), the *ācārya* the chief functionary for the *pratiṣṭhā*, is to assemble various articles including auspicious items that should be displayed to the image after the eyes are opened Reverently attending each of these, he should subsequently proclaim the mantra beginning "Visnu protect me" Then, concentrating on the divine form and fixing his thought clearly on all the divine forces and the constituents of the universe gross and subtle, he should "open" the image s eyes first, the right, then, the left

Admittedly a pallid and sketchy substitute for a full translation of the VAK's directives that summary should nonetheless suffice to indicate the major features of this ceremony That this ritual is a crucial stage in the installation of the image is unquestionable But it is just as certain that the *pratiṣṭhā* is not accomplished through this ritual eye opening Because of the ritual, the image is no longer inert material It is enlivened Still, it is not yet the god who receives offerings and graciously bestows blessings It is no more the god to *whom arcana is performed than the newly born prince is th* reigning king In some regards like a birth ceremony or a awakening even a *dīkṣā*, the *akṣyunmocana* is not precisel either With certainty, we can say no more than that throug this ritual the image is mysteriously changed and its very specia career has begun

The new status attained by the image through the eye opening ritual is further emphasized by the immediately

succeeding ceremonies of cleaning or purification (bimbasuddhi) Thereafter, a fire is to be kindled, the site for the sacrificial arena (*yāgasāla*) purified and the fireplaces made, and the fire brought to the arena[25] These preparations together with the selecting and making ready of the water pots are elaborately discussed in chapters 28, 29, 30, and the first part of 31 of the VAK The *yāgaśāla* ready for the commencement of the 'public" spectacular phase of the *pratisthā*, the VAK then details the actions involved in the crucial *kumbha āvāhana*, "inviting (Visnu in his most glorious form together with his consorts and entire entourage) into the waterpot," stage number 8 in the outline

The *ācārya* is to prepare for *dhyāna* by carefully assuming the auspicious sitting posture (*svastikāsana*) and by uttering the ' Visnu protect me' *mantra* and the *ātmasūkta* He then performs the threefold *prānayāma* and recites further *mantra* s At this point, his concentrated meditation is to begin

The *ācārya* is directed to summon Visnu—"the all—sustaining, eternal, immeasurable, inconceivable, featureless, formless" essence of all things This is not to be understood as "producing' Visnu in any sense but rather as revealing Visnu, making him present in a definable and describable way "As the fire pervading the tinder becomes manifest on account of friction, just so, by means of the friction of meditation, does Visnu become manifest in the heart of the devotee '[26] Fixing this *sakala* Visnu in his mind—a palpable presence so to speak,[27] and having meditated now on the resplendent, figured god, the *ācārya* calls him into the water in the pot with his thought and then honors (*arcayati*) him with flowers and drinking water[28]

The VAK next instructs the *ācārya* to take the god and the waterpot (*devamkumbhamca*) to the sacrificial arena where having set up (*pratisthāpya*) the god (*deva* that is, the image) in a bathing place and having put down the waterpot on a pile of grain to the south of it the *pratisthā* ceremonies are to continue There are more intriguing (and problematic) aspects to the *kumbhadhyāna* than I have space to explore in this essay, but we can catch our breath at this stage in the exposition and call special attention to a few arresting points

First, it should be noted that it is the *acarya*'s power of concentrated meditation and his *bhakti* that are the twin agencies finally effective in manifesting Visnu not *mantra* s or any set combination of formal ritual procedures The focus is on the *acarya* as disciplined devotee rather than technician, and this is a dimension often lost sight of by students (and critics) of the agamas

A related point of special interest and importance is that Visnu graciously accepts the *acarya*'s invitation and descends into the water in the kumbha where, it seems he is considered to be fully present He does not enter into the image, but the image itself is from this time referred to as *deva* Thenceforth, it appears from the text that the rituals of *pratistha* are conducted for a Visnu who appears in a double form as dynamic immanence visible" only to the *bhakti* inspired *dhyana* of the *acarya* and awaiting physical manifestation to the eyes of all *and* as a figure, somehow divine, but awaiting realization The water and the image The *pratiṣṭha* will be effected when the two are joined, at the *mahasamproksana* when the water is sprinkled on the image

That grand climax of the installation succeeds the several rituals mentioned in the VAK's outline, numbers 9 through 17 The space at my disposal simply will not permit me to dilate on these rituals at this time, but this should not suggest that they are inconsequential in any sense The *homa* s, the bathings the chanting, the singing—all these acts in the *yagaśala* are important They combine elements of preparation anticipation, and celebration

At length, the time of the *mahasamprokṣaṇa* arrives Image and waterpot are to be carried to the sanctum The instructions of the text are clear and direct Taking water charged with *śakti* from the waterpot with a gathering of grasses to the accompaniment of the *mantra* This is Visnu (and saying) 'May the Lord come' he should invite (while sprinkling) the head of the image (and) proclaiming, I invite Viṣnu [61] Through that action the *pratiṣṭha* is accomplished

Briefly, almost casually, the VAK then sketches the remaining items in the programme salutation, *arcana*, and the festive celebrations And the full discussion of *pratiṣṭha* concludes with an elaboration of the specific, personal benefits that will be acquired by those persons—*brahmana, kṣatriya, vaiśya*—who, ' because of *bhakti* [devotedly], perform the installation of Visnu in this manner

Many details of importance in these complex proceedings have necessarily been left unmentioned here and many problems of interpretation await further investigation Nonetheless what I take to be the main contours of these ceremonies should be reasonably clear But we are not yet quite finished with this survey of the text Before turning to a review of the *mahasamprokṣana* at the Nambi Temple in Tirukkurungudi we should take a quick look at the VAK's directives for performing *vimānapratiṣṭha*, "the consecrations of temples [shrines] "

In chapter 39, the VAK sets forth instructions for *vimāna pratiṣṭha*, and it is soon apparent that the procedures will generally follow the pattern of the *bimbapratiṣtha* Indeed, the text tends to assume reasonably enough, that images will be set up at the time the temple is consecrated[30]. First, the performers are to be sure that *nrsimha* is placed on the south or west of the first, second, or third story (*tala*) of the *vimāna* "Destroyer of all enemies, he secures the realization of all goals "

The shrine protected, the *akṣyunmocana* of the associated images should be performed Following that, the VAK orders the performance of rituals that are, in a sense a kind of equivalent of the *akṣyunmocana* for the *vimanā* This consists of mantra recitations and the offering of oblations, and it is immediately followed by sprinkling the shrine with water to purify it—rather like the *bimbaśuddhi* ritual

Thereafter, the layout of a yāgaśāla is summarized This time, the *vimāna* is to occupy the central position with the various fires flanking it Then the *acārya* should carry an adorned pot of pure water into the *vimāna* and set it down in front of the *dhruvabera* (which, of course, must have been " established " previously) The *ācarya* –having prepared him-

self in the same way as he should for the *kumbhadhyāna* ritual in the *bimbapratisthā*—concentrates on the god and "should call forth that *vimana* directly into the water in the pot from the *dhruvabera*"

On first reading this, I was somewhat surprised Even more surprising is that the text immediately provides an explanation of the act—a kind of "brāhmana" extremely rare in this *samhita* "Because Visnu, lord of the devas, is the vital essence of everything (*sarvesam prāṇabhūtah*) and the abode of all (*sarvāvasa*), there is the summoning of the *vimāna* from the *dhruva*"

After "inviting *vimana*" into the waterpot, the latter is carried out of the temple (*ālaya*, usage helping to avoid confusion with *vimana*) and placed to the west of the *sabhya*-fire, where the ceremonies continue with recitations, oblations, and dancing and singing through the night Next morning, the *acarya* and his assistants bathe, enter the *alaya* and honor the god At the auspicious time (*muhūrta*), *acarya* and ritual sponsor (*yajamana*) put on fresh clothing and the fees are given (*daksiṇadana*)

Taking the waterpot on his head, the *acarya* is to circumambulate the *alaya* and then to carry the waterpot up the *vimana* After declaring the *mantra* "May the Lord come" at the top, he should summon with four *mantra* s "(This is) *vimana*, (this is) made of Visnu, (this is) abode of devas, (this is) the coming to be of Vaikuntha" (*vimanamvisnumayamdevavasamvaikuṇṭhodbhavam*)[31] The *vimanapratistha* is thus concluded, and, according to the text, all the benefits of a grand *pratistha* come to the performers whether images are installed concurrently or not

Pratistha Ceremonies at Tirukkurungudi

In this final section I want to set down some of my impressions of the *pratistha* rituals I observed at the Nambi Temple in Tirukkurungudi, Tirunelveli District, Tamil Nadu The Nambi Temple—properly, Alakiya Nampi Rāyar Kovil—is one of the celebrated 108 Vaisnava *divyasthala* s, but it is possibly one of the least well known except to residents of Tamil Nadu's southern districts Among the Alvārs, four, including Nammāl-

vār and Tirumankai, sang praises to Nambi Inscriptional evidence from the temple compound dates to the ninth century, and sculptures and structures witness the patronage and craftsmanship of the mighty, and the pious, and the gifted from Pandyā and Cēra country for hundreds of years

In recent decades, however Tirukkurungudi's great temple, like unnumbered other village temples, has endured rather than prospered The daily rituals, pulse of the temple, continue without interruption and each year at the *brahmotsava* Lord Nambi is borne forth through the streets in colourful processions But the Tiru Jīyar Matha, the temple's owning and managing agency, has seen its income dwindle, land-holdings shrink, and rents wither Struggling to support the continuation of proper ritual, the matha has been unable to mount major building projects Even maintenance has been a struggle

A few years ago, a renovation committee was formed to raise funds for the repair and restoration of images, *vimāna*-s, and the temple's *citragopura*, a unique and precious multi-storied gallery of miniature stone and wood carvings The VAK tells us that there are several afflictions—from accidental breakage or disfigurement to sheer age and decrepitude—to which consecrated images and structures may fall victim. To prevent incurring *doṣa* in the majority of these cases, the works prescribed are not very complicated, consisting usually of a physical redressive act or actions—such as setting a fallen image upright—accompanied by certain offerings and recitations Sometimes, however, as at Tirukkurungudi—where one might simply say that *Vimāna*-s and images have worn out, it is ordered that the objects be refabricated and then consecrated

The results of the renovation committee s efforts were gratifying, enabling the commencement of work on the refurbishing of images and the principal *vimāna* s in 1979. The tasks were not simple nor inexpensive, for the Nambi Temple is a complex sacred community with several major *vimāna*-s and a large population To be renovated (and, as it turned out, substantially remodelled) were the three, separate, side-by-side

shrines of Nambi-Visnu in his standing, and reclining postures, the shrines of his two consorts and the Krsna, Alvār and Yoganārasimha shrines (the last mentioned a sort of suburban *vimāna* a block east of the main temple precincts and just outside the *agrahāra*) In addition, the two Śiva shrines in the inner circuit of the temple, housing Mahendragirinātha and Bhairava, were to be renewed[9] This work was to involve reconditioning the sancta and completely redoing the rising portions of the *vimāna* s from the prastara s up to and including the *stūpi* s.

The immoveable images in all these shrines also were to be completely reconditioned This required stripping away the plaster and paint from the carved stone images, cleaning them and then carefully reapplying a coat of special plaster and repainting each figure Of course, the daily routine could not be suspended during this work A temporary sanctum was constructed in the mahamandapa of the Nambi Rāyar Vimāna by enclosing an area between pillars To this sanctum moveable images from the three Nambi shrines and the shrines of the two consorts were brought and *arcana* and other services continued without interruption

However much it warrants closer investigation on another occasion, a detailed consideration of the material restoration of these shrines and images falls outside the limits of this paper. Yet the question of the extent to which the actual renovation followed or matched agamic prescription undoubtedly rises too naturally and insistently in the present context to be ignored altogether. Risking being unintentionally cryptic while being necessarily brief, I hope it may be sufficient here simply to respond that the actual work was prosecuted carefully but that neither the procedures nor the finished products consistently indicated a controlling influence of the VAK or any other Vaikhānasa text Although that is admittedly somewhat disappointing, it is finally neither surprising nor dismaying The "āgamic authenticity" of undertakings such as this lies as much if not more in the integrity and genuineness of the ritual dynamic as it does in the concretising of specific textual injunctions And those, like myself who have a keen interest in textual analysis must be on guard against confusing living

performances with enactments and devaluing the former when they appear to be inexact instances of the latter

The *mahāsamprokṣaṇa* of the Nambi Temple images and *vimāna* s was originally scheduled to take place as the climax of several days of ritual ceremonies in mid June, 1981 Because of certain problems that made it impossible to complete the renovation work by that time, the functions were postponed to the six-day period August 31st through September 5th Even if space were available here, it would be unproductive to describe each and every act performed during these six days and to relate it point for point to the VAK Such an exercise would necessitate a great deal of repetition without holding the promise of adding significantly to an overall understanding of what was taking place, how, and why Instead, I present an overview of the actual ceremonies by means of two accompanying charts In the first (Chart 1), I have given in transliteration the Tamil programme for the performance as that was printed on the formal invitation Chart 2 is an English summary of the programme following the format and order of the original To facilitate reference to the textual paradigm, I have added numbers after each event corresponding to the number of the item in the VAK's summary outline reviewed above A quick comparison will show that the events as they actually took place followed almost exactly the sequence prescribed by Marici I shall return to look more closely at some of these performances momentarily

To assist in visualizing the setting and the ceremonies I have provided two diagrams of the *yagaśālā* as it was constructed in the south corridor at the second *prākara* of the Nambi Temple a full layout (Diagram A) and a detail of the "central," square of nine squares arena (Diagram B) Diagram A clearly shows how complex it was to perform a simultaneous *pratiṣṭhā* for all the sacred images and the *vimāna* s of the temple Distributed over an area extending some 50 metres are 33 *pitha* s The 35 *agnikuṇḍa* s (firepits) crowding the *yāgaśālā* not only complicate the layout but also proved to be the most troublesome and discomforting accessories of the ceremonies for the functionaries as well as for spectators

MONDAY 31 August	TUESDAY 1 September	WEDNESDAY 2 September
cānti hōmaṅkaḷ pūrṇāhuti tiruvārātaṉam kōṣṭi	ratṉanyāsam nayaṉōnmilaṉam pimpasutti ativāsam akṉimataṉam mahācāntihōmam ārampam	piratana hōmam mahācānti hōmam pūrṇāhuti tiruvārātaṉam kōṣṭi
śrīsvāmi niyamanam perutal ācārya varunam	alankāra tirumañcanam varukai	
mrutsankirahana ankurārpaṇam	katastāpaṉam	
dikpantaṉam	yākasālā piravēsam piratāna hōmam mahācānti homam vētapārāyaṇa tivyapirapanta sēvai ārampam pūrṇāhuti tiruvārātaṉam kōṣṭi	as in A M

CHART I The Tamil Programme for the pratiṣṭhā at the Nambi Temple

THURSDAY 3 September	FRIDAY 4 September	SATURDAY 5 September
	vicvarūpam pūrnāhuti yātrā tānam tasatānam	
as in A M., *Wednesday,* 2 September	kata uttapanam SIMHALAKNATTIL MAHASAMPRŌK- SANAM	
	tiruvaratanam *mantrastatai* cārrumurai tirttaviniyoka kosti	vicēsa alankara tirumañcanam sēvai cāttumurai kosti
	pakkam inra civan sannitiyilum ate lāknattil — mahakumpāpisēkam nataiperum	
	alankāra tirumañcanam	
pirotāna hōmam mahācānti homam cayanātivāsam pūrnāhuti tiruvārātanam koṣti	perumāl tayarutan *śripalimantapa* purappātu kerutotsava tiruviti-p- purappātu	perumāl tāyārutan cantirapirapai vāhanattil tiruviti-p- purappātu

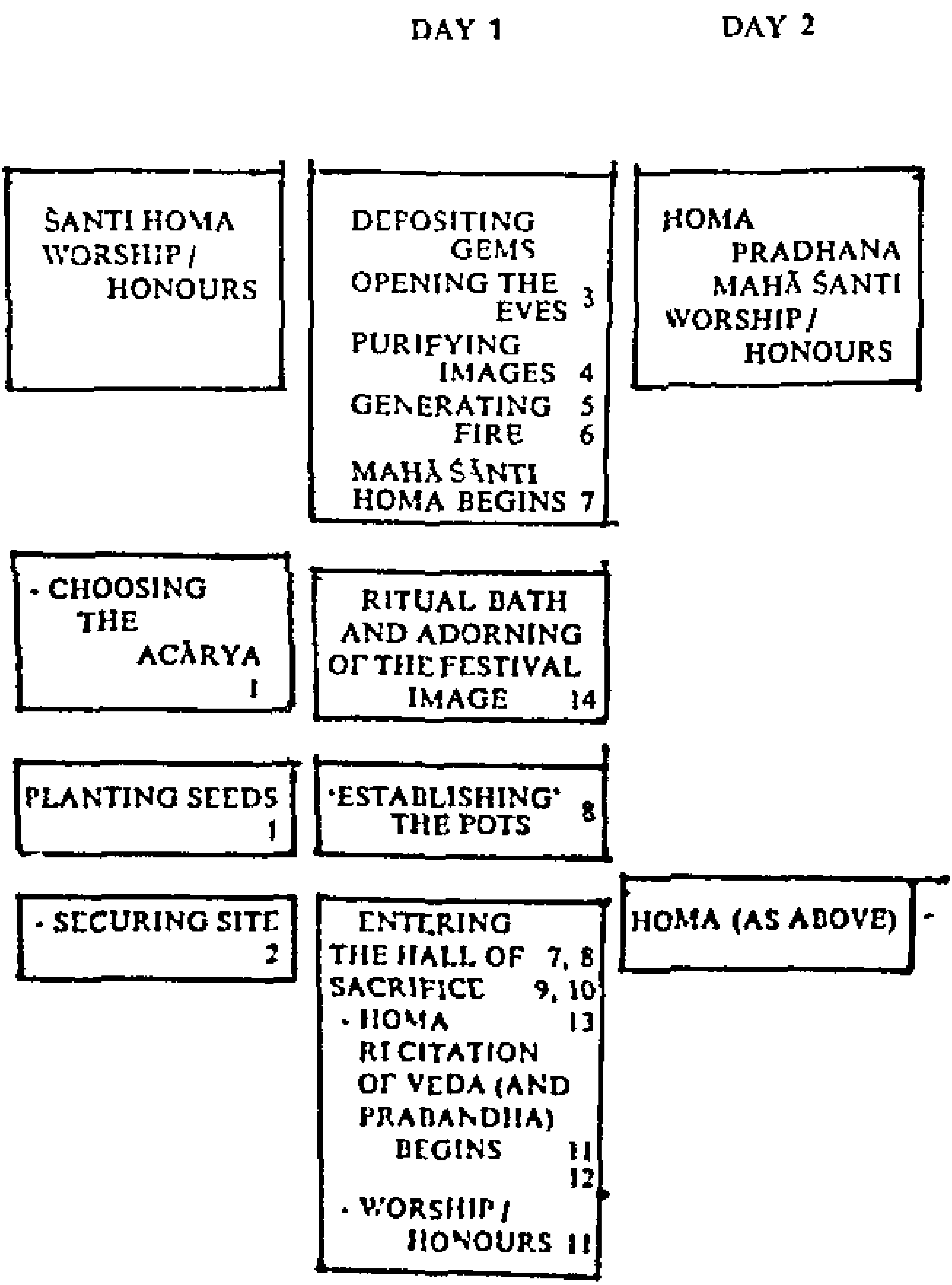


CHART 2: English Summary of the Programme for the pratiṣṭhā at the Nambi Temple

DAY 3	DAY 4	
	CONCLUSION OF OFFERINGS 16	
HOMA (AS ON PRECEDING DAY)	- TAKING UP THE POTS - PRATISTHA 17, 18 19	RITUAL BATHING AND ADORNING OF FESTIVAL IMAGE WORSHIP / HONOURS 24 25
	WORSHIP RECITATION 20 HONOURS 21 DISTRIBUTIONS TIRTHA 22	
	SIVA VIMANA KUMBHABHISEKA (SAME TIME AS NANDI PRATISTHA)	
HOMA (AS BEFORE) - SERVING THE ENCOUCHED LORD 10 WORSHIP / HONOURS	RITUAL BATHING AND ADORNING IMAGE 23 UTSAVA STREET PROCESSION 23	UTSAVA STREET PROCESSION 23

DIAGRAM A

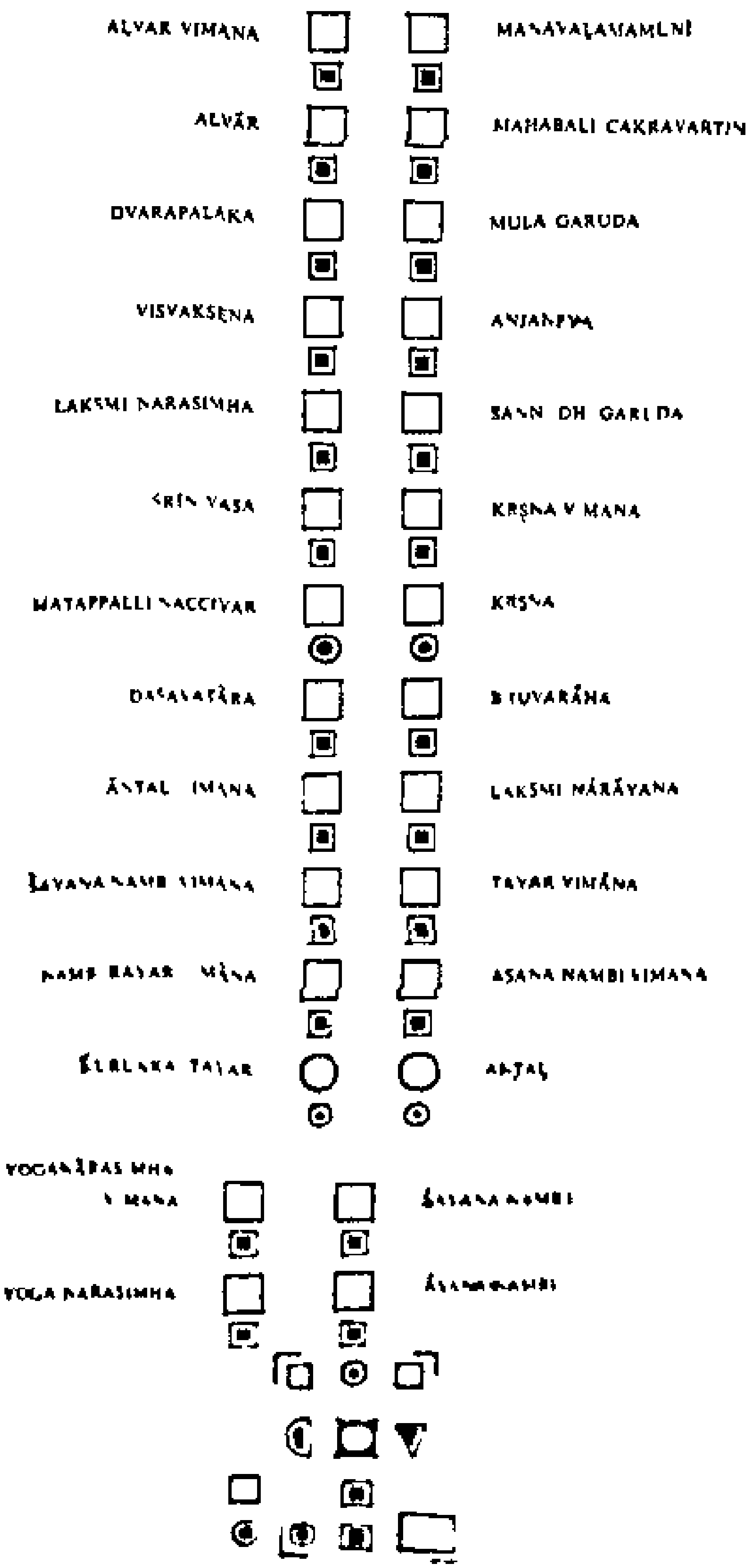
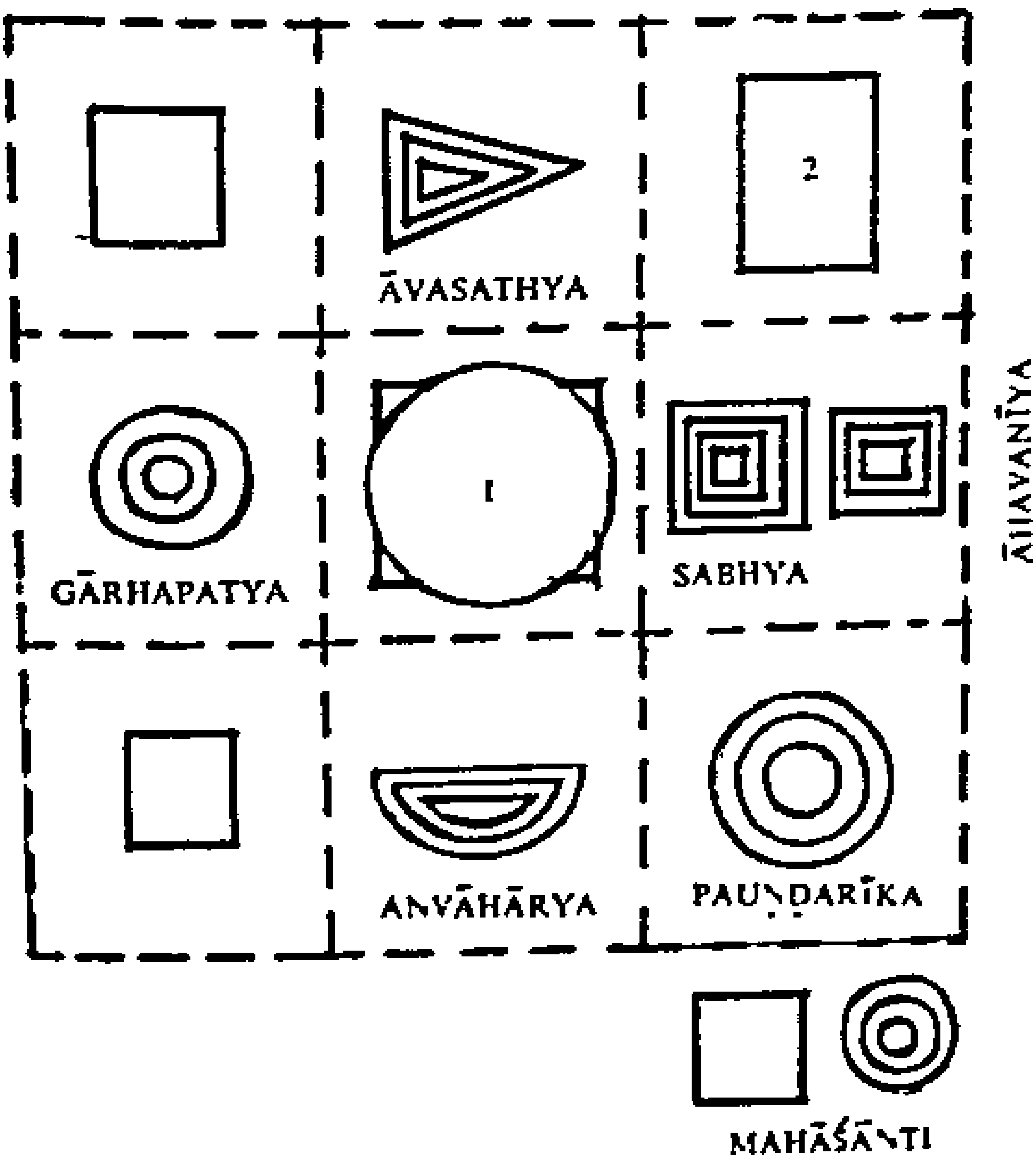

ALVAR VIMANA
ALVĀR
MAHABALI CAKRAVARTIN
DVARAPALAKA
MULA GARUDA
VISVAKSENA
LAKSMI NARASIMHA
KRSNA
LAKSMI NĀRĀYANA
TAYAR VIMĀNA
ASANA NAMBI VIMANA
YOGA NARASIMHA

DIAGRAM B Detail of the yagaśala



1 Nambi Rāyar (*pīṭha*)
2. *Lajanapīṭha*

Laboriously kindled in the temple's inner circuit by means of a pointed fire-bow (*mathadanda*) spun against a tinder stick (*araṇi*), fire for the *pratiṣṭhā homa* s was brought to the *yāgaśālā* and initially deposited in the *gārhapatya* (household fire) The remaining fires were started by coals or brands from the *gārhapatya* (as they were also to be re-kindled from that fire in the event of their going out) Several factors conspired to make these procedures more difficult at the Nambi Temple than it is usually hoped they will be Wood for the fires unhappily, was the same green scrub that plagues many South Indian house-holders Hard to light, it requires constant fanning and other manipulations to keep burning rewarding a moment's inattentiveness either by going out altogether or by subsiding to a smoulder from which issues great billows of dense and acrid smoke

In the *yāgaśālā*, the officiating priests struggled valiantly to keep the fires ablaze Assistants ran to and fro bringing fresh coals from the *gārhapatya* to encourage recalcitrant fires At one point, the emaciated *gārhapatya* self extinguished precipitating a temporary crisis of agitated deliberation among the priests as to an acceptable way of getting it going again Such success as there was from all this effort was the production of enormous volumes of smoke This, in turn, had other annoying consequences Despite the illumination provided by tube lamps tied to every pillar, the greater part of the *yāgaśālā*—occasionally even the entire arena—disappeared from the spectators' view Efforts to photograph details of the performance were frustrated Nastier still was what the smoke did to the priests A gentle but insistent breeze from the east wafted the smoke directly into their faces Eyes watered noses ran and sometimes so did the functionaries Here and there, a priest would be forced to retreat from the smoke for a moment to draw a clear breath Rising from cloud at his seat eyes streaming he would continue to gasp *mantra* s despite his choking and coughing Through long hours for three consecutive days of this joyous *pratiṣṭhā*, most of the priests and many of the spectators wept

Of course my recollection of such trying conditions should not be misunderstood as suggesting that the *pratiṣṭhā* was conducted improperly or clumsily Far from it In fact the many

intricate rituals comprising the *pratistha* all were executed with notable precision and grace A closer look at the personnel involved and at some of the features of the more colourful ceremonies should make it possible to lace together most if not all, of the more important issues relating to text and context prescription and performance, that have been my concern in this paper

Three Vaikhanasa *arcaka* s regularly serve in the Nambi Temple, far too few to handle the many tasks in the *pratistha* Another two dozen were needed and they were invited to parti cipate from other Vaikhanasa temples in southern Tamil Nadu [33] As mentioned earlier, the VAK is quite specific about the qualifications of those individuals fit to be chosen by the *yajamana* to perform the *pratistha* It is Tirukkurungudi s good fortune that the Nambi Temple s senior *arcaka* is a learned and experienced ritual specialist Selecting the *acarya*, then, posed no problem and he, in turn, chose the qualified persons who would assist him

While the actual selection of the functionaries was accom plished easily and without fanfare the accompanying charts make clear that certain ceremonies were associated with it at the Nambi Temple These *acaryavarana* ceremonies merit attention for at least two reasons First although they are undoubtedly traditional, they are not elaborated upon by the VAK, which is concerned rather with the criteria of fitness to conduct the *pratistha* than with any formal displays that could attend the selection or confirmation of qualified personnel Second even a brief review of the *acaryavarana* functions will introduce the *pratistha* s *yajamana* and it will then prove possible to estimate the role of the patron in determining precisely how proceedings enjoined by a text like the VAK will be conducted in fact

As understood in the VAK, a *yajamana* is a *bhakta* who sponsors the building of temples and images their consecra tion and maintenance and the performance of regular and special services by qualified *arcaka* s [34] The rewards accruing to such generous devotees are frequently and specifically detailed in the text In a legitimate—if restricted—sense, each donor to the renovation of the Nambi Temple and to the *pratistha* is then a

kind of *yajamāna*, and the material importance of these donations as well as their significance as expressions of personal piety, community, and even of competition should not be underestimated But at Tirukkurungudi the designation *yajamāna* in a fuller sense belongs more properly to a single person who, at first glance, might seem to be an unlikely candidate He is the Tenkalai Srī Vaisnava *sannyāsin* who heads the Tiru Jīyar Matha

No doubt a *sannyāsin* who, by definition, has neither wealth to donate nor personal aspirations to instrument in this life—is an improbable *yajamāna*, but a little more information about this particular individual should help make understand able how and why he is just that To begin, this *mathādhipati* or *jiyar* is the leader of the agency that owns and manages the Nambi Temple As such, he is the head of a kind of institutionalised *yajamāna* and, thus, represents its functioning in his own person despite his personal status as renunciant Looking at the matter somewhat differently, it will be seen that the *jiyar* is reckoned by his followers and disciples as exemplary teacher and as the purest and most principled of devotees As he is leader of the *matha*, so the *matha* is evidence of his and his precursors' holy achievements Pure and selfless devotee, the *sannyasin jiyar* spiritualizes and ennobles the role of the *yajamāna* In return, the primacy accorded to him and the honours insistently bestowed on him by the *arcaka* s as conduits of the gracious blessings of Nambi-Visnu confirm the eminence of his personal and spiritual status In short, *matha* and temple, *jiyar* and *arcaka* sustain one another

The *ācāryavarana* ceremonies are the first of several events in the series of *pratisthā* functions to illustrate and to confirm that vital relationship between *yajamāna* and priest Monday, mid afternoon, *gulika* The only quiet time of a Tamil village's day Sannidhi Street stretches empty and silent before the Nambi Temple, its residents seeking refuge in their houses from a sun that bleaches the sky, evaporates the breeze, and transforms the dusty street into a molten carpet, fit practice ground for anyone aspiring to participate in fire-walking ceremonies The unhappy person stranded on that street feels utterly alone and not a little foolish, dancing absurdly first on one foot then

the other, vainly seeking relief Even the withered shadows have fled

Then, music Nagaswaram player and drummer stride through the temple entry way, down the stairs, and out onto the fiery street Close behind follows a legation from the Jiyar led by an official bearing a tray of coconuts, betel leaves and areca nuts The party moves quickly to the house of the temple's senior *arcaka* where he and the other officiants for the *pratiṣtha* are waiting The Jiyar s delegation enters while the musicians remain in the street, rousing the residents In a moment, the commission re emerges with the priests, the *acārya* wearing a splendid sash of heavy red silk with gold brocade

Invited with ceremony, the priests publicly announce their acceptance by swiftly marching up Sannidhi Street to the temple Once within its precincts, they go first to the principal Nambi shrine and then to a private audience with the Jiyar The VAK gives us the gist of the exchange

yajamāna( ) ācāryamsampūjya kāryamāvedya (") karmedaṃ mekuruṣveti yācayet

ācāryah( ) (")tattatkarmakariṣyāmiti saṃkalpya ārabhet

" Honouring the *ācārya*, the *yajamāna*, having made known what needs to be done, should request, ' Perform this ritual for me ' Resolving, ' I will perform that ritual,' the *ācārya* should begin " (VAK, ch 26)

So was the invitation extended and accepted and with the priests going a second time to the temporary sanctum of the major Nambi shrine following their meeting with the Jiyar, so was the agreement confirmed This inaugural ceremony emphasized the concord among the major parties—sponsor, priest, deity The worthiness of the *yajamāna* and the fitness of the *ācārya* were declared, and Nambi Viṣnu sanctioned and sanctified the agreement between the two

The *Jiyar yajamāna* was even more prominent in several ensuing *pratiṣtha* functions On the night of the grand *yāga-śālāpraveśa* he proceeded to the threshold of the sacrificial arena with the same pomp as that which accompanied the procession of waterpots and images The VAK knows nothing of *jiyar* s

or *ālvār* s or vernacular (Tamil) hymns, yet the presence of the Jiyar as a sort of chief guest along with his retinue singing the devotional songs of the Tamil Vaiṣṇava saints was accommodated easily naturally Even *pratiṣṭhā* for the ālvār *vimāna* and for the Tenkalai Śrī-Vaiṣṇava teacher Manavalamahāmuni was incorporated into the fabric of the proceedings without apparent violation of what might be called the "agamic integrity" of the *pratiṣṭhā* The concurrent celebration of the Jiyar's spiritual eminence and the legacy of the ālvārs was woven into the agama programme while yet remaining a discrete, if complementary, sectarian statement

The proclaiming of another sectarian statement of a rather different order added further to the colour, complexity, and, indeed, the noise of the *pratiṣṭhā* ceremonies Around the corner, on the eastern corridor of the same circuit of the temple, a *yāgaśālā* had been constructed for the ceremonies leading to *pratiṣṭhā* and *kumbhābhiṣeka* of the Śiva *vimāna*-s and their presiding forms Details of this set of performances according to the *śaivāgama* must be postponed for presentation in another context, but it will be easy to picture the dimension added by this parallel—competitive yet complementary—series of rituals At times it seemed to the spectator in those closed stone hallways that all the praises to all that is divine were being sung and chanted at once, as if all that is important to this world and for any others was happening at the same time To the witness of oblations in one arena the sounds of the other rituals were like an echo or antiphony And, finally, they were both and yet neither

At last, the *mahāmprokṣaṇa* was at hand Minutes before dawn, the waterpots were taken from the *yāgaśālā* s and borne through the crowd, some to the sanctums, some to the roof of the temple complex and thence to the tops of the *vimāna* s The sky flushed, then paled, and it was *simhalagna* Within the great Nambi shrine the large bell given four centuries ago by Travancore royalty announced the moment and simultaneously, inside the sanctums and at the *stūpi* s the sacred water was sprinkled I understand the VAK to say that one who sprinkles the water from such a waterpot will be freed from all misdeeds

(*pāpa*) of mind, speech and body. The *arcaka*-s concur, but members of the crowd have a different idea; it is to be sprinkled that confers the blessings; and the priests' task only begins when they have finished at the *vimāna*-s

I, my camera, notebook, and recorder received a gracious share of that water, but I cannot be assured that my account of these ceremonies and their textual reference has thus been rendered free from errors of description or of interpretation Necessarily I have sketched only some major features, and those rather broadly. As many of my impressions and preliminary conclusions have already come up along the way, only a little needs to be added by way of bringing my remarks to a close on this occasion

I have made a point of insisting that the Tirukkurungudi performances were faithful to the directives of the VAK. It should not be forgotten, however, that an interpreter who has one eye on the text and the other on the performance should be cautious lest he fall into a hermeneutical trap Not infrequently, one comes to understand—or to think he understands—the full meaning of a passage in a text by seeing an actual performance And, certainly, it is no less true that there are times when the performance is illuminated by the text Yet there is a danger that one may "read" a text by means of performances and performances by means of a text. The benefits of combining text study with the observation of performances are undeniable, but one must be careful not to think he sees in the one what may actually be only in the other

I have emphasized also that the extant, written texts are an important part of tradition but only a part of it Tradition as a supple and vital process resides more completely in its living exponents *arcaka* s who—linked to the past and to the future—inherit, individuate, and transmit tradition The *arcaka* whose performances deviate in any way from what we expect to see after reading a text *may* be ignorant. But it could as well be the case that we have failed to grasp the sense of the text, the act, and the meaning of tradition *Arcaka* s are, after all, the authors of the *saṃhitā* s, it is not the other way around

More than once at Tirukkurungudi I observed an *arcaka* reading *mantra* s reciting from a notebook rather than from memory This is perhaps a scandalous and disillusioning thing But I think that the reliance on a written 'crib" is properly disturbing not only because it may indicate that the performer s learning is insecure We ought also to be reminded that there is a great danger that certain efforts to ensure the maintenance of āgamic standards may actually exacerbate the difficulties challenging the survival of tradition and may, in fact, hasten its demise

To the extent that we are captivated by the notion that texts are the essential repositories of tradition there can rise the idea that tradition can be refreshed or resuscitated simply through learning those texts. The collection and preservation of texts (and editing and translating them) are without question important tasks, but to neglect to recognize and to support the living repositories of tradition with equal vigor is to suggest that the *arcaka* s and vidvāns are dispensable—that, on the basis of the texts alone it would always be possible to "make" the required number of competent bearers of tradition

Of course, traditions themselves may degenerate into hollow scholasticisms, but bibliocentrism could have equally pernicious consequences Rituals might be impeccably faithful to certain texts, yet would this be more than a ritual of reconstruction, a simulacrum of the ritual produced by living tradition? Save the books, by all means, but save the *arcaka* s, too Lose them and you not only lose all that the texts will not tell you, lost as well will be the animating spirit of tradition We may subsequently come to know the words to be intoned and even the gestures We may know the texts very well indeed but such ritual actions as *pratiṣṭhā* will be no more than good shows and the temples will become mere museums

NOTES

[1]Research on which this paper is based was made possible by grants from the American Institute of Indian Studies, and I gratefully acknowledge their assistance I want also to record my thanks to K K A Venkatachari for inviting me to participate in the Seminar and to the other participants, especially N R Bhatt,

[9]A distinctive Vaikhanasa claim is that the community continues as a *carana* of the Taittiriyasakha of the Krsna Yajur Veda and thus, that Vaikhanasa services in temples are exact equivalents of Vedic fire sacrifice

[10]Although brief, the *jñana* and *yoga* sections of the VAK are neither muddled nor perfunctory As N R Bhatt observed during the Seminar sessions, there is a philosophy in the *agama* and it would be well worth the effort to explicate it

[11]As Bruno Dagens points out, these texts function also to protect *arcaka* s and their particular domain from tampering by such outsiders as temple managers See B Dagens *Les enseignements architecturaux de l Ajitagama et du Rauravagama* (Pondichèry Institut Francais d Indologie, 1977) pp 123 4

[12]Indeed P Nageswara Rao called attention to just such a community of *silpin arcaka* in the course of Seminar discussions

[13]Directives in the texts that are for sponsors (*yajamana* s) are presumably meant to be transmitted by *arcaka* s to the lay persons by way of informing them of their obligations as well as the rewards to be derived from properly fulfilling them

[14]For example, festivals may range in length from one to nine days according to the text That the *brahmotsava* at the Nambi Temple in Tirukkurungudi seems to be 11 days in duration does not violate even this rather flexible prescription can be explained by considering it to be a sequence of shorter festivals

[15]It seems to me possible that the *samhita* s themselves shoud be considered as based on and elaborating earlier *prayoga* s

[16]Sometimes such individuals prepare and publish *prayoga* s on various special topics Recent Vaikhanasa publications of this kind, however, are commonly little more than anthologies of passages from the *samhita* s

[17]There will, of course be varying degrees of expertise among the *arcaka* s—hardly a recent phenomenon, and some

will be specialists in particular aspects of ritual. It is also true that some *arcaka*-s who are well known for their skill in one area may be considered by their peers to be inept in others.

[18]It tends to be the case that the *śāntihoma* will be performed prophylactically for all major rituals.

[19]*Ankurārpaṇa*'s exact significance is not clear, and the ceremony merits closer study. On the evidence from the Vaikhānasa texts, it would be hard to accept the explanation that the rite is performed to determine if the time and circumstance are "fertile" and therefore auspicious for the ensuing rituals. For one thing, the seeds have already sprouted at the time the ritual is performed, so there is no question of determining whether or not they will germinate before continuing with the other rituals.

The VAK says merely that "the god is pleased" by *ankurārpaṇa*.

[20]While the phrase "divinity incarnate" may have some unfortunate overtones, I employ it here to help counter the widespread and erroneous notion that the god is thought to be only "emblematically" present in the image and the equally incorrect idea that the image is simply a device or aid for meditation or devotional practice.

[21]See above, note 19.

[22]The qualifications of the performers are meticulously enumerated in the VAK. For the ceremonial significance of the *ācāryavaraṇa*, see below.

[23]This may be done by painting the eyes or by carving or chasing them. The symbolism and significance of this act for the artists themselves—a fascinating topic introduced to me in several discussions with *śilpin*-s—cannot be taken up here.

[24]These *mantra*-s, many but not all of which are found in other Vedic *saṃhitā*-s, are essential to the understanding of the Vaikhānasa *saṃhitā*-s and *sūtra*-s. They have been published (in Telugu script) as *Śrīvaikhānasamantrapraśna*, 2 vols (Eguvarpalayam: Sri Vaikhanasa Press, 1945 and 1946). The first four *praśna*-s provide *mantra*-s for the *Gṛhyasutra*, and the final four contain *mantra*-s to be used in temple rituals according

to the *saṃhitā*-s Ch B R K Acharyulu, a young Vaikhānasa scholar in Kothalanka (East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh) is now at work preparing a critical edition One manuscript has recently been found which includes three additional *praśna* s

[25]There are six fires in the central *yāgaśālā* area Five—*āhavanīya*, *sabhya*, *anvāhārya*, *avasathya* and *gārhapatya*—are the fires distributed among the five worlds by Brahmā—respectively to the divine world, the world of men the intermediate world, the great world, and this world The sixth fire, *pauṇḍarīka* represents the world of *tapas* These are discussed (not without obscurity) in the VAK chapter 30 See also Diagrama A and B above

[26]*Yathāhyaraṇyām vyāptohnvahnir mathanāt sannihito bhavati tathaiva dhyānamathanena bhaktasya hṛdi viṣṇuḥ sannihito bhavati* VAK, chapter 31

[27]*Sakala* is, of course, the "opposite" of *niṣkala* , but it is no easier to translate for that It should be stressed that Viṣṇu depicted with all his distinctive characteristics is not in any way inferior or subordinate to the *niṣkala* Viṣṇu

[28]These are essential features of traditional hospitality and are also key *upacāra* s in *arcana*

[29]*idaṃ viṣṇuriti mantreṇa kumbhastamādhavam śaktiyutaṃ kūrcenaidaya āyātu bhagavāniti bimbasya mūrdhni viṣṇumāvāhayāmiti saṃśrāvya āvahayet* VAK, chapter 33

[30]Occasionally, a *vimāna* alone could require renovation and the replacement of the images would not call for *pratiṣṭhā*

[31]I have not yet been able to trace further information about these *mantra* s

[32]That the Nambi Temple site was considered sacred from an early period as an abode of Śiva is attested by references in the hymns of the Āḻvārs

[33]Vaikhānasas are generally so thinly distributed through Tamil Nadu that functions such as this *pratiṣṭhā* become events of considerable, trans-regional significance for the community, drawing participants from several districts

[34]The distinctive features of this conception of *yajamāna vis-à-vis* other, presumably earlier conceptions deserves more attention than I am able to give here

CHARIOTS

Dr R P KULKARNI

INTRODUCTION

Chariots or carts are used in India from very ancient times The design of a chariot and that of a cart is same Carts were in use at the time of Indus civilization for carrying heavy materials like bricks, grains etc Indus civilization flourished on farm produce and trade The use of carts was indispensable A toy cart made of mud is found from the excavations at Mohenjodaro It gives the idea of the cart that was being used at that time (before B C 4000) It has two wheels connected to a single axle with a shaft perpendicular to it and having one end connected to the body of the cart and other end to the yoke

CHARIOTS OF THE VEDIC PERIOD

Copious mentions of chariots are available in Rgveda (B C 4000) It seems that a chariot was an important means of transportation at that time Gods are requested to come to the sacrificial ground on chariots and not on horse back Chariots were also used in battles The chariot of Indra on a battle field (R V 1 102 3) or Indra called by the warriors sitting on a chariot (Rathamatasthivānśah R V 2 12 8) are mentioned In R V 1 53 9 the number of warriors sitting in chariots is given as large as 60099 (Śastii sahasrā navatiñ nava Rathyaha) This shows the vast numbers of chariots that were being used at the time of a battle Indra is called the best of Rathītaras (R V 1 84 6) The fighting arms were kept in the chariot (R V 5 57 6) These copious mentions of chariots alongwith warriors indicate that right from Rgveda period detatchment of chariots (Rathadala) might be an important part of the Āryan military

The chariot of Indra was having two horses (R V 1 7 2 1 84 3 etc) Chariots with one horse (R V 5 56 6) and with three

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horses (R V 10 33 5) are also mentioned Chariots having horses in even numbers upto maximum ten are also mentioned (R V 2 18 4) A chariot having ten horses given in charity is also mentioned (R V 8 3 23) Chariots used for a long journey or during battles to which a number of bullocks were hitched are also mentioned in *R*gveda (10 131.3)

Chariots might be of different dimensions depending on the number of persons it was meant to carry The chariot of Aśvinau is with three seats (Trayah bandhurah, *R* V 1 34 9, 1 47 2) A chariot for carrying seven to eight persons is also mentioned in *R*gveda (4 2 4) Agni is requested to bring in his chariot gods, Aryamana, Varuna, Mitra Indra Visnu, Marut and Aśvinau. A chariot so big as to carry 67 persons is also mentioned (Ebhiragne Saratham patnivatastrinsatam trinsch devān, R V 3 6 9) It is doubtful that such a large chariot having a capacity of a modern bus was manufactured at that time

These references in Rgveda indicate that chariots for carrying two to eight persons having one horse or their numbers increasing to ten were used for battle as well as for travelling These chariots must be very strongly built and the art of joinery might have been highly progressed

There were three main parts of a chariot The axle with wheels, the shaft and the yoke. In order that wheels should not be separated from the axle, lynch pins are provided (R. V 6 24 35, 3 53 17) Seats were located on the top of the axle (R V 3 53 17) Axle of a chariot is mentioned many times in *R*gveda (1 20 3, 1 30 14 15) Āryans knew that the temperature of the axle increases considerably because of friction between it and the wheels (Tasya na akśastapyate bhuribhārah, R V 1 164 13) Ghee was used as a lubricant between the axle and the nave (Aitareya Brāhmana, 17 1)

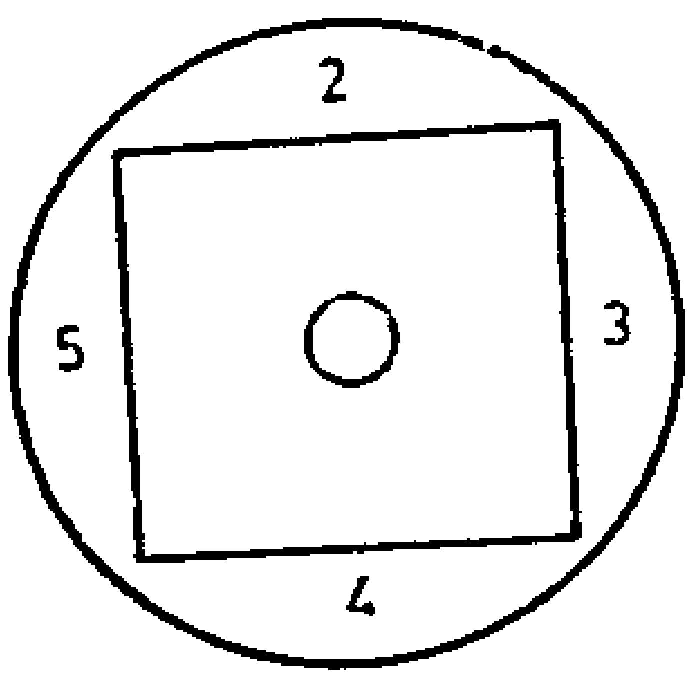
Chariots are generally provided with two wheels but the chariot of Aśvinau was with three wheels (R V 1 34 2 1 34 5, 1 118 1 2) The wheel of a chariot consisted of a nave, spokes felly and rim The numbers of spokes mentioned are five (R V 1 164 13) or twelve (R V 1 164 11, 1 164 48, 4 13 15) Twelve numbers of spokes may be indicative of 12 months of a year Felly was placed around the spokes (R V 1 32 15 1 141 9)

A rim is provided (R V 1 34 2, 1 88 2, 1 139 3, 1 166 10, 5 52 9)

Solid wooden wheels were also used for chariots Such a wheel has three components, Nabhi, Upadhi and Pradhi Bandhayana Śulbasūtra (5 1-36) describes constructions of cities of chariot wheel with spokes and of solid wheel *

It is mentioned in Sankhyayana Śrauta sūtra (14 22 18) that the two wooden planks used for pressing soma creeper to obtain its essence are prepared from the central two planks of the solid wheel of the cart by which the dead bodies are taken to the cremation ground This description gives the idea of the arrangement of planks in a solid wheel From the description of arrangement of bricks to construct a "Pradhiyukta Rathacakra citi" (fig 1 a), it seems that there used to be one solid square plank in the centre with four numbers of curved wooden planks fixed to it so as to obtain circular shape of a wheel The diameter of the wheel might be small as seen in the case of solid wheel of

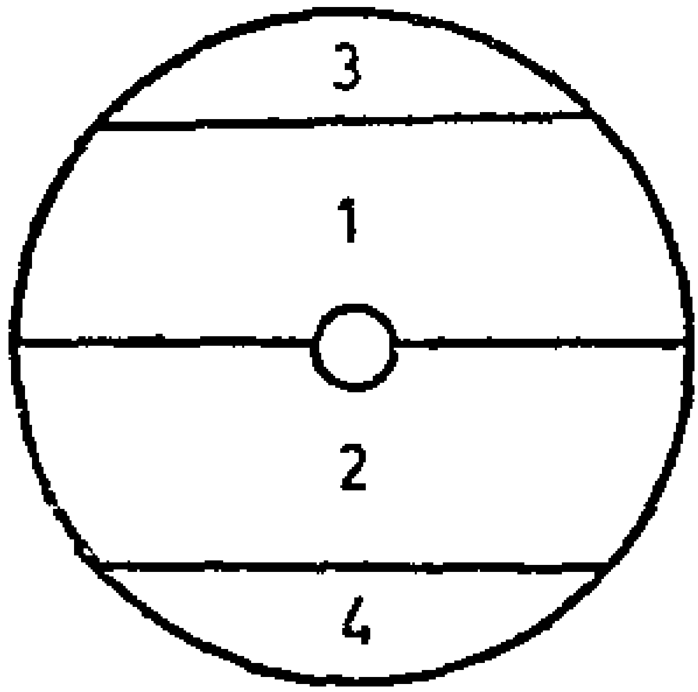
1— (a)



* Rathacakracitı is mentioned much earlier in Taittiriya Brahmana of Krsnayajurveda rascention (3 12 5)

a present day cart According to Saṅkhyāyana Śrauta sūtra the arrangement of planks could be as shown in fig 1 b

1—(b)



The idea about the probable diameter of the chariot wheel could be obtained from Sankhyayana Śrauta sutra (7 2 6) The height to which a tree stump is to remain after cutting down the tree for preparing a yupa is mentioned The height of the stump may be equal to the ankle, or knee or smaller than the height of the axle of the cart (Gulphadadhne vrschej jānudadhne anakśasaṅgam vā) The height, given is in increasing order The height equal to knee is 32 angulas (60 6 cms) (Āpastamba Śulba sutra 10 18) The height of the axle of a cart may be somewhat more than 60 8 cms It appears that the radius of a wheel may be 36 angulas i e diameter = 72 angulas = 1 37 metres

The seats of a chariot used to be very near each other (R V 3 14 3) There were three seats to the chariot of Aśvinau, two for them and one for the charioteer (R V 1 139 4, 4 44 1) In a two seat chariot the driver's seat is on the right whereas the warrior s seat is on the left side (Savyeṣṭha). Copious mentions of a charioteer are available in Ṛgveda (1 55 7, 1 141 8, 4 46 2 etc)

Chariots were provided with a Śikhara resting on pillars The chariot of Aśvinau was having three pillars (R V 1 34 2) The chariot of Sun god is described as having pillars connected at the top by ornamental arches (R V 10 85 8) Windows of the chariots are also mentioned (R V 10 75 9) On the top there used to be a śikhara (Kakubah) (R V. 1 181 5)

Horses were hitched to the yoke (R V 1 100 16, 1 134 13) At both the ends of a yoke there used to be holes in which yoke pins (Samya) are inserted (R V 1 35 4, 3 33 13) The yoke, in the centre was provided with a wooden piece so that the chariot will stand horizontal after the horses were detatched from it This piece of wood is called drughana (R V 10 102 8) As the number of horses drawing the chariot used to be large, upto ten numbers, it seems that horses may have been drawing the chariot with traces Ten horses cannot be placed one beside the other but could be as pairs behind pairs In *Rgveda* saddle is mentioned (5 61 2, 10 10 13)

A shaft perpendicular to the axle and connecting the chariot with the yoke is provided In case the chariot is to be drawn by two horses, the shaft is located in the middle of the chariot Two shafts may have been provided if the chariot is to be drawn by one horse It is mentioned in Yajurveda (1 8, 1 9) that the shaft should be straight and strong

Dimensions of three main parts of a chariot are given in Mānava Śulba Sutra (10.1 2 1) The length of the axle is 104 angulas (1 976 m) that of the shaft 188 angulas (3 572m) and yoka is 86 angulas (1 634m) long

The chariots used to be decorated The chariot of god sun is described as formed of gold (R V 1 130 16) But th s may be the imagination of the poet The chariot of Indra was covered with animal skin (R V 6 47 26) It may be covered with silk cloth (R V 10 85 20) A chariot is called Pandukambali if it is covered by a kind of red coloured blanket imported from Gāndhāra Dvaiparatha is the one which is covered by leopard skin and Vyāghraratha is upholstered by tiger skin as mentioned in Atharvaveda (4 8 4)[1] It is further mentioned that chariots were painted with different colours (R V 1 35 4)

Wood of Khadira (Acacia catechu) and of Śiṁsapa (Dalbergia Sissoo) trees or of Śalmali tree (Bombax Heptaphyllum or Salmalia Malabarica) was preferred to manufacture a chariot (R V 3 53 17, 19 10 85 20)

Chariots were prepared by carpenters By the time of Yajurveda (16 27) a separate guild of chariot makers (rathakāra)

apart from carpenters was mentioned indicating that manufacture of chariots was a skilled job and the numbers and variety of chariots being fabricated was so large that a chariot maker had become a separate artizan different from a carpenter Concentration with which a chariot maker is manufacturing a chariot is described in *R*gveda (10 119 5) It is a painstaking job and it is described that the back of the chariot-maker used to ache because he has to work bending (R V 1.5 18) Chariots used to be polished and their joints were strengthened by ten numbers of ropes (R V. 10 101 10) Various types of designs were used to be carved on the wooden parts of chariots (R V. 5 1 11) and a workman skilled in carving, pesitra, is mentioned in Yajurveda (3 12)

Brahmins may be designers of chariots Rbhu and his two brothers Vāja and Vibhavan were sons of Angirasa and students of Tvastā It is mentioned in *R*gveda (1 111 1) that Rbhu had prepared a chariot for Indra *R*gveda 4 33 6, 4 36 2 give that *R*bhus had prepared chariots *R*bhus are also mentioned as rathakāras in Vāyu Purana (4 102 103)

CHARIOTS IN PĀLI LITERATURE

Chariots are copiously mentioned in Pāli literature, particularly in Jātaka kathā A chariot adorned with precious stones is mentioned in Mora (Peacock) Jātaka Chariots were used for travelling from one city to another (Bhaddasāla jātaka) They were used for hunting (Sandhikheda Jātaka and also Sattigumba Jātaka)

Chariots were made of wood in Buddha period (B C 300). In suppāraka Jātaka it is mentioned that the blind scholar rejected a chariot because it is made of hollow wood The joints of chariots were fastened by ropes prepared of skin The chariots were used to be upholstered by skin (Kukkura Jātaka) In Cittasambhuta Jātaka the royal chariot is described as 'sukate cittasibbane' The royal chariot was properly designed and fabricated It was covered with either silk cloth or skin of animals (Also see Brāhmaṇadhammika sutta in Suttanipāta).

Different types of chariots mentioned in Jātaka Kathā are Vaijayanta chariot of Indra (Kulawaka Jātaka), chariot for

festivals (Fussa Ratha mentioned in Gumbiya Jātaka), painted chariot (Nigrodha Jātaka) and covered chariot or cart (Cullakalinga Jātaka Kanavera Jātaka). A simple chariot will have a śikhars of tree leaves as mentioned in Mahyaka Jataka.

It is mentioned in Fandana Jātaka that a brāhmin chariot maker was living in a village of carpenters located nearby the city of Vārānasī It, therefore, seems that even at the time of Buddha period brahmins used to make chariots

The cost of a chariot is given as eight (gold) Kārsāpanas (Cullasetthi Jātaka)

CHARIOTS AS SHOWN IN CARVINGS

In the book "The way of the Buddha"(2) in chapter 'Buddha's message' plates 74 and 75 depict the war of relics (from sānchi, stone, middle architrave, Stupa 1, first century B C.) (Fig 2)

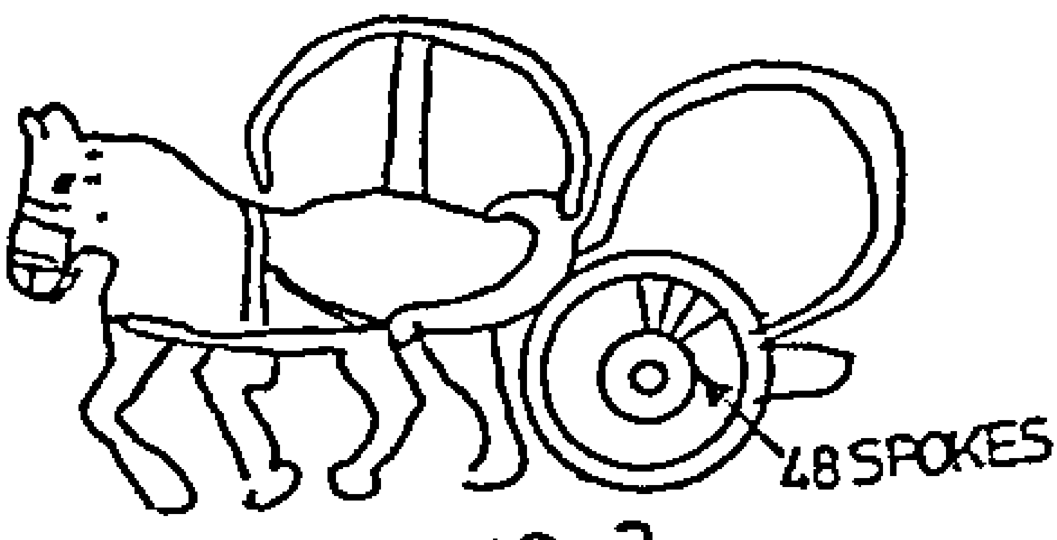


FIG: 2

The panel represents seven rivals advancing for the sieze of the city of Kusinara to have a share of Buddha's relics The chariots shown are provided with two wheels each having 48 numbers of spokes The diameter of the wheels is rather small, may be 0 34 metres Two horses are hitched to the chariot Warrior is standing and charioteer is sitting on his left The chariot has curved panels approximately 0 67 to one metre high on both the sides as well as in the front. The back side is open

2. Plate 17 of chapter 'Growth of Buddhism' illustrates Aśoka's visit to the Rāmagrāma stūpa (Stone, Middle architrave,

complete The diameter of two wheels is quite large The numbers of spokes is also quite large, more than 16

A battle between Yudhisthira and Jayadratha is shown on a erracotta from Ahicchatra (5th century A D)[2] (Fig 5)

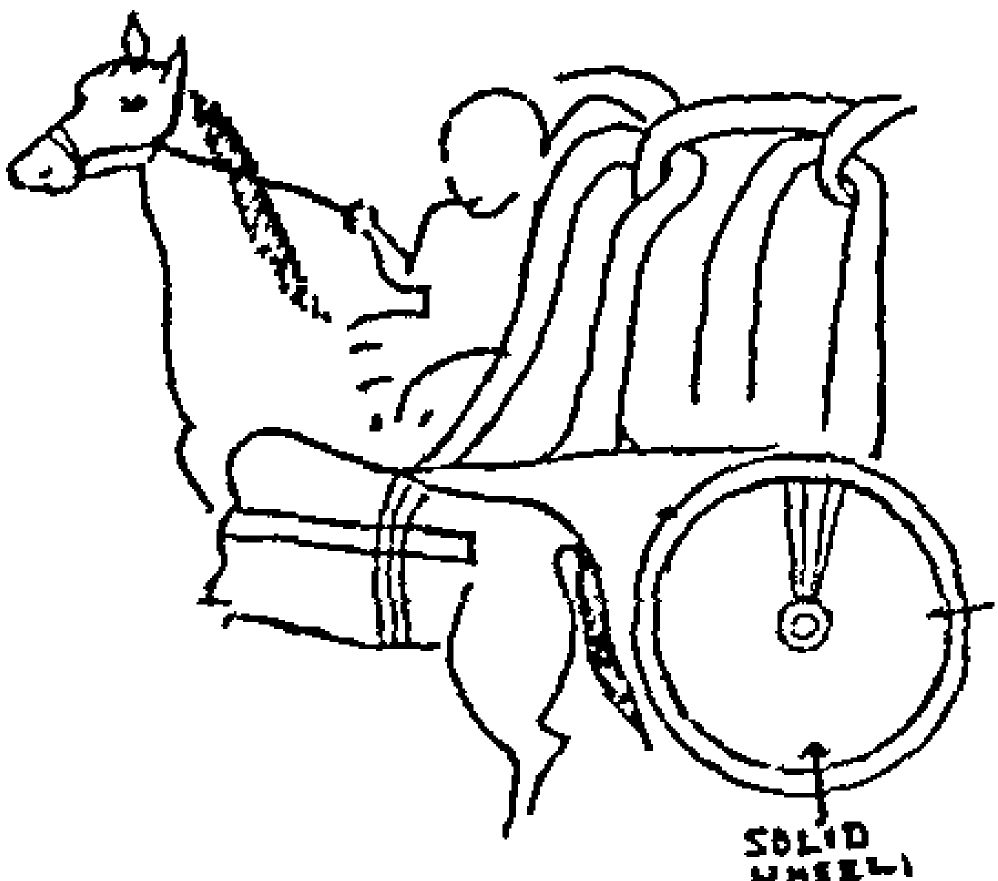


FIG.- 5

south gate, Stūpa 1, Sanchi, first century B C) Here King Aśoka is shown riding a chariot The design of the chariot is same as shown in fig 2 above Aśoka and the charioteer are standing side by side the charioteer being on the left of Aśoka Number of spokes is 20 per wheel

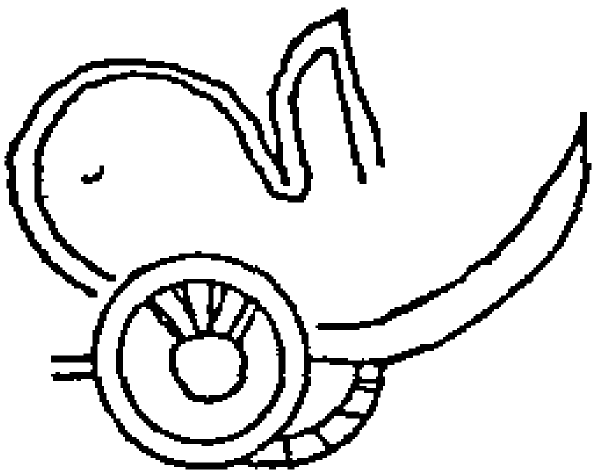


FIG 3

On the nor h gate of stūpa 1 of Sāñchi, Versantara Jataka is illus trated Here the chariot is similar as shown in fig 2 above but four numbers of horses are shown hitched to it Here the shaft is clearly seen and it is rising at 45° as shown in (fig 3) indicating that the diameter of wheels is much smaller than the height of the horses

In the same book on plate 36 (Bodhisatva s life) a dog cart, to which two rams are hitched, is shown Bodhisatva is going to school (Fig 4) It is a small lightweight cart with railings on

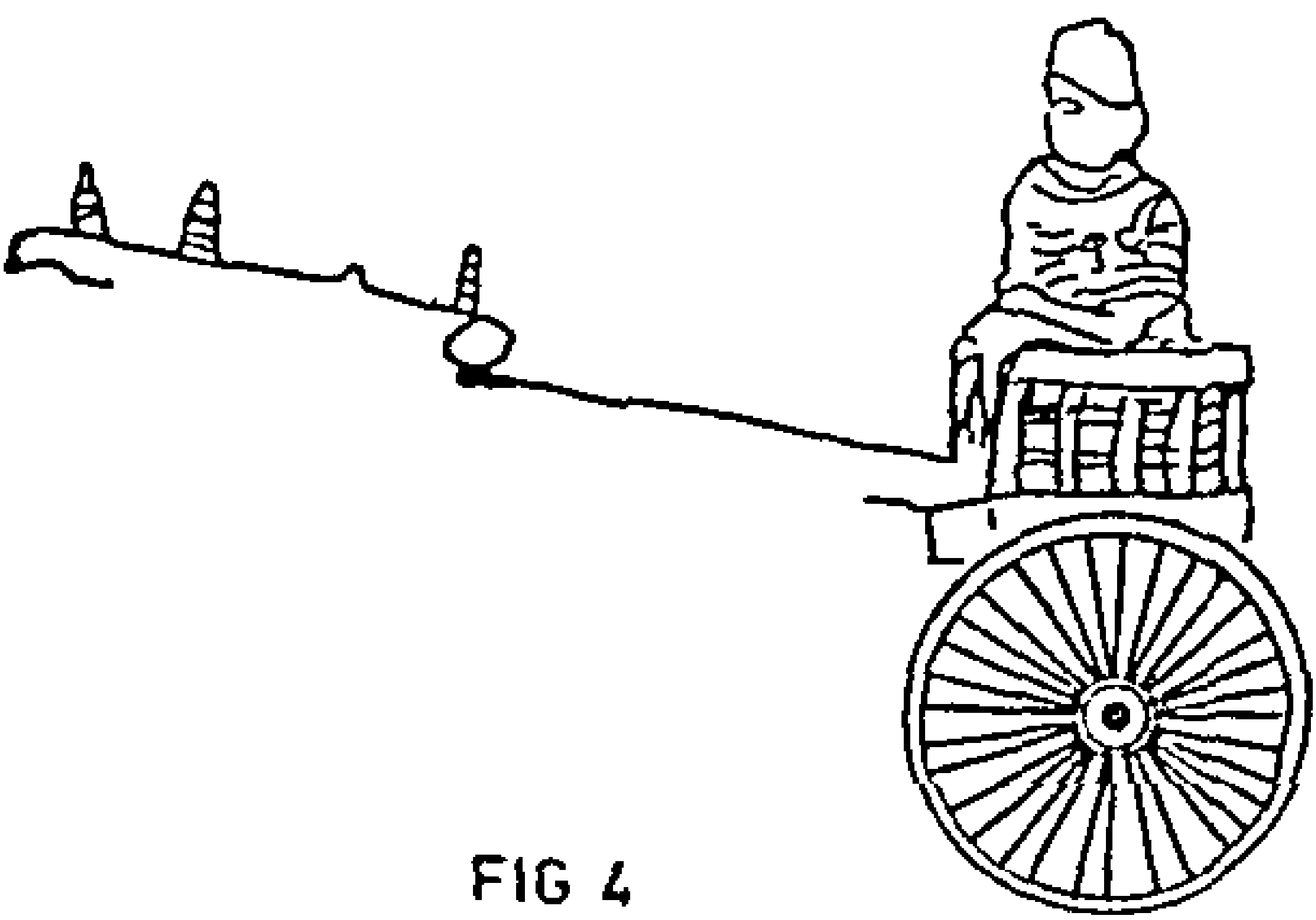


FIG 4

both sides, the front and back being open The shaft originates from the plank and is joined to a yoke with yoke pins etc

complete The diameter of two wheels is quite large The numbers of spokes is also quite large, more than 16

A battle between Yudhisthira and Jayadratha is shown on a terracotta from Ahicchatra (5th century A D)[2] (Fig 5)

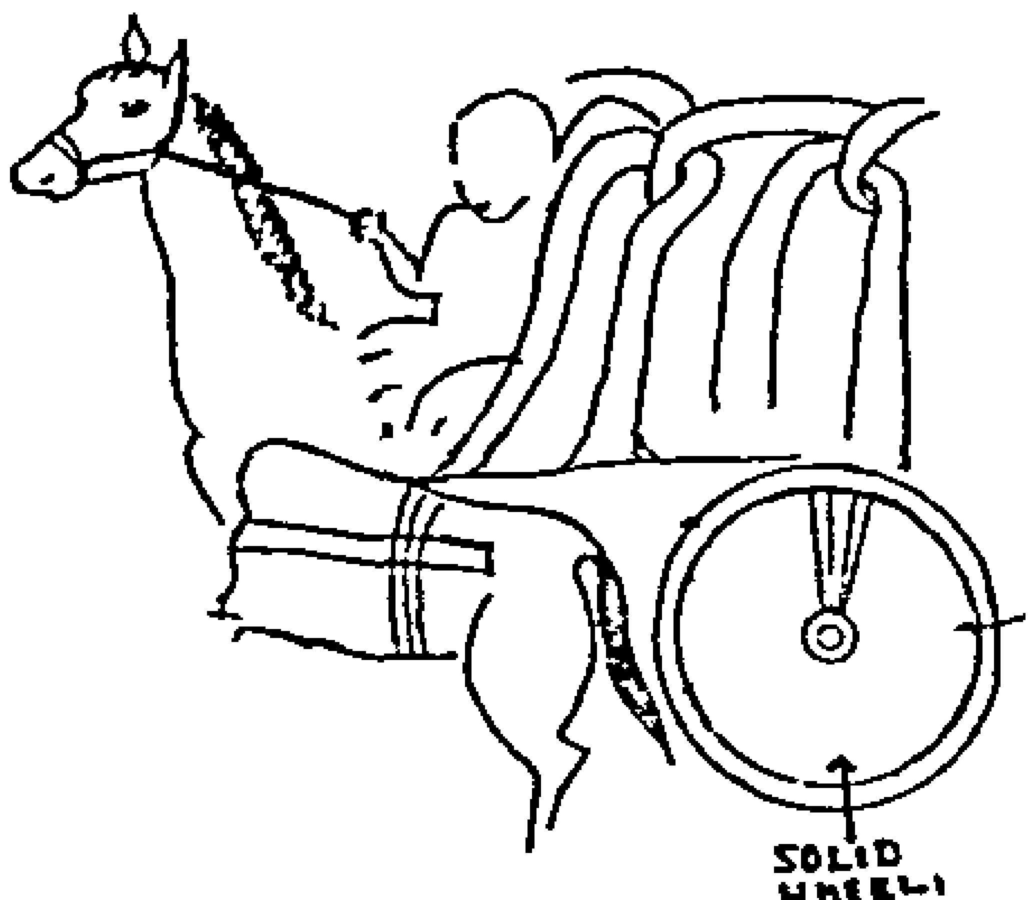


FIG.- 5

The chariots in which the two warriors are standing are having two wheels These are solid wheel type There is a railing in front as well as to the sides of the chariot so that a warrior standing in a chariot could keep his balance The charioteer is sitting in front and is between the two horses and the front railing The diameter of the wheels is approximately equal to 1½ to 2 metres as these are shown of height equal to that of the horse back The chariot is light weight in



comparison to the one shown carrying queen Māyā (fig 6) The bottom plank is thin

Relief from the procession path, Barobadur, Indonesia[3]—Queen Māyā is shown seated in the state care (fig 6) She is

hastening with her retinue to the Lumbini Gardens, where she had been told in a dream, her son, who was to be the salvation of the world, should be born The royal car is provided with four wheels having eight spokes each and are of equal diameter The diameter of the wheels may be 0 5 metre as assessed from the height of queen Mayā The lowermost part of the car is decorated with a flower design There is a railing approximately 0 25 metre high for part length and full width of the chariot Otherwise there is nothing but a plank which is of dimensions such that queen can sit comfortably with a maid servant in a corner Two horses (or bullocks) are hitched to the chariot There is no separate seat provided for the charioteer. He is sitting on the horse on the left side

Plate 44 depicts the scene of Bodhisatva encountering an old man (Ajantā, Stone 7th century A D) It is a two wheel cart with two horses Wheels have 16 spokes The charioteer is sitting between the two horses and his seat is apart The chariot is provided with railings

The same scenes of Bodhisatva seeing an old man, a dead body etc are shown in Borobudur (8th century A D) (Plates 45 to 47) (Fig 7) The chariot is merely a plank with four wheels. On the raised platform Bodhisatva is sitting, on his left on the

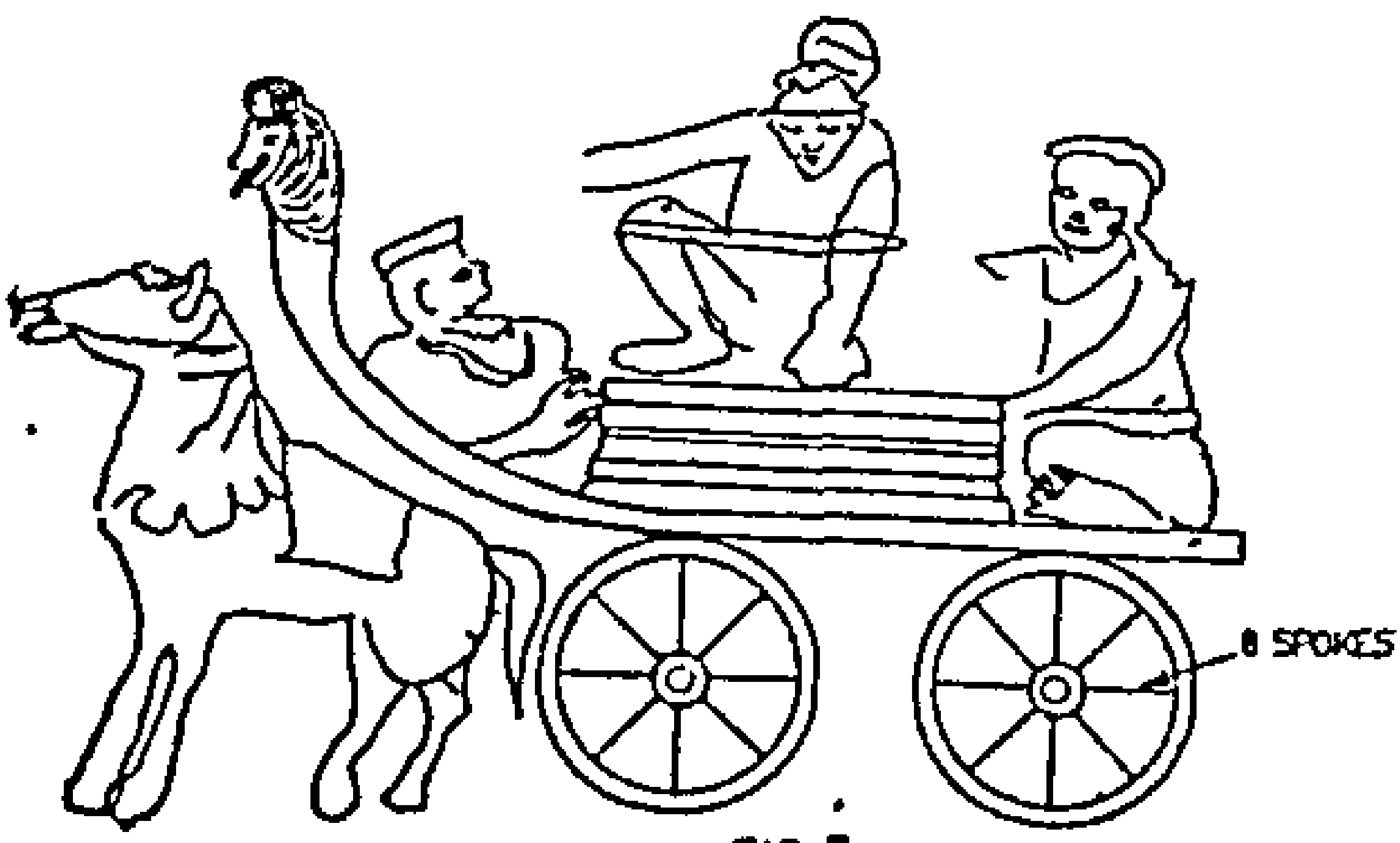
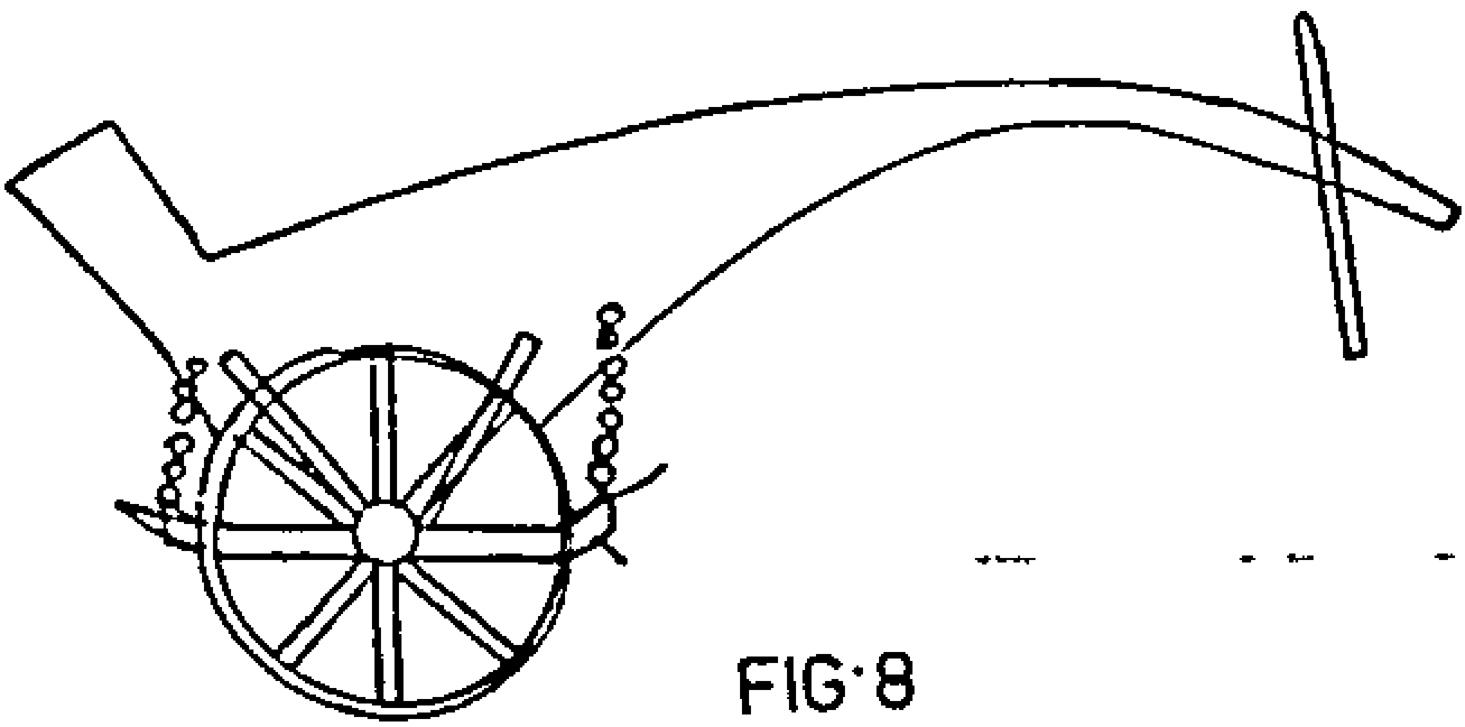


FIG 7

lower level his servant is sitting The shaft is a continuation of

the plank and its front is adorned with a figure of a lion The shaft is curvilinear concave upward Two horses are hitched to it. There are four wheels having eight spokes Bodhisatva is shown facing not towards the horses but at right angles to them, The charioteer is not having any separate seat. He is sitting on the shaft

In the coloured plate D in the book 'The Art Heritage of India' by Havell, a painting by Manohar for *Ācārya* Jasavant, which is of Rajasthani school (Mewara) A D 1649, meeting of Rāma and Paraśurāma is illustrated (fig 8) Here a typical



FIG·8

Rājasthani chariot with two wheels and two horses is shown The shaft is curved convex upward The wheels are shown with wheel guards

These figures illustrate the development in design of chariots from first century B C to 17th century A D. The chariots shown in the procession path of Borobudur need not be those depicting their design of 8th century A D but might be representative of Buddha period (B C 300)

CHARIOTS IN KAUTILIYA ARTHAŚASTRA

Kautilya has described seven types of chariots depending upon their use and major dimensions The biggest chariot (Uttama) is 10 Vitasti in height and 12 vitasti in width The height and width of chariots decreases by one vitasti so as to make the remaining six varieties of chariots The name and dimensions of each type of chariot are given in table below.

Name of chariot	Height		Width	
	Vitasti	metres	Vitasti	metres
1 Best chariot (Uttama)	10	2 28	12	2 736
2 Temple chariot (Deva)	9	2 052	11	2 508
3 Festival chariot (Punya)	8	1 824	10	2 288
4 War chariot (Sāṅgrāmika)	7	1 596	9	2 052
5 Travelling carriage (Pariyānika)	6	1 368	8	1 824
6. Chariot for marching against an enemy city (Parapurābhiyānika)	5	1 14	7	1 596
7 Chariot for training (Vaināyika)	4	0 912	6	1 368

CHARIOTS AS DESCRIBED IN PURĀṆAS

It is described in the 88th chapter of the Anuśāsana parva of Mahābhārata that the sage Cyavana asked king Kuśika and his queen to pull a sāṅgrāmika chariot Here the description of war chariot is given The chariot is big enough to keep all the armaments of war It has a flag, its columns are of gold The columns are connected by beautiful arches (Toranas) It has numbers of small bells (Kinkinī)

Chapter 22 of Anuṣaṅgapāda of Brahmāṇḍamahā purāṇa gives the description of the chariot of sun The different parts of a chariot are given therein They are Nābhi, Arā, Nemi, Rathanīda, Kūbara, Bandhura, Ramyā, Ghoṇā, Akṣadaṇḍa, Anukarṣa, Īṣā, Varutha, Dhvaja, Yuga, Akṣakoṭi, Dhura and Raśmī. Nābhi means nave, arās are spokes, nemi is felly and these together is called rathanīda Kūbaras are two and these are the two legs forming the shaft (Īṣā) Bandhura means seat Ramyā may be the place at which the Kubaras are joined to the axle (Akṣadaṇḍa) Ghoṇā is the other end of īṣā. Anukarṣa means bottom of a carriages Varutha means wheel guard

Dhvaja is flag Yuga are those parts of dhura which are placed on the shoulders of bullocks. Akṣakoṭi are the ends of the dhura and Raśmī means traces (For more details please see Code) 2(4)

In the Purusottama ksetra Mahātmya of Vaisnavakhanda of Skandāpurāna description of three chariots each meant for Vāsudeval, Balarāma and Subhadrā is given The width of the chariot of Vāsudev is 16 hastas (7 296m), that of Balarāma and Subhadrā are of 14 and 12 hastas (6 384 and 5 472m) width respectively The numbers of wheels are 16, 14 and 12 respectively The chariots are described as given below as it gives good idea of a chariot for festival

स्वक्षं सुचक्र सुस्तम्भं सुविस्तीर्णं सुतोरणम् ॥ 19 ॥

सुध्वज सुपताकं च नानाचित्रमनोहरम् ।

विचित्रवघमियुनपुत्रकोव एयान्वितम् ॥ 20 ॥

अर्धहारक निर्व्यूट साक्षाद्रविरथोपमम्

मेघगमीरनिर्घोष दृष्ट्वा कर्पगुणर्युतम् ॥ 21 ॥

The festival car used at Puri is 13 70m high, 10 67 meters square with 16 wheels each 2 13m diameter

Further the different types of bad omens that are suggested by the breaking of different parts of a chariot are given below.

Name of the broken part	Bad omen
shaft	destruction by brāhmins
Axle	destruction of Kṣatriyas
Śamyā	destruction of Śudras
Yoke	famine
Floor of a carriage	destruction of people
Wheels	siege by another king
flag	change of king

CHARIOTS DESCRIBED IN ŚILPAŚĀSTRAS

Detailed descriptions of chariots are given in Mayamata (31 27 62½) Aparajitaprccha (195 14 33) and Manasara (43 1 79) Also see Silparatna (33 60 62) A two hundred year old manuscript on palm leaf called Viśvakarmiya Ratha laksanam is available in Saraswati Mahal Library Thanjavur It is written in Grantha script The text is very corrupt From the repetition of information it Appears that the information on chariots is collected from different sources which are not always given A brief description of different chapters of this treatise on chariots is given in appendix 1

The dimensions of different parts of the chariot like wheels axle bhara upapitha Adhisthana and height of chariots as given in these three treatises are somewhat similar as can be ascertained from tables 1 and 2 in which dimensions of different parts of different types of chariots according to Manasara and Viśvakarmiya Rathalaksanam are given A few thumb rules are explicitly stated in Mayamata as given below

a) The length of chariot is one and one half times its width (Mayamata 31 30)

b) The diameter of wheels may be twice the height of pillars or it may be equal to the distance between wheels at axle level (31 39)

In addition below listed thumb rules are noticed

i) Diameter of nave is one third the diameter of the wheel

ii) Breadth of chariot is equal to the length of the axle which in turn are equal to the diameter of wheels

c) A chariot is to be adorned like a prāsāda of one two storeys as the case may be (31 57)

Mānasāra describes different types of chariots their names are Nabhasvāna bhadraka Prabhañjana bhadraka Nivāta (vāta?) bhadraka Pavana bhadraka Indra bhadraka and Anila bhadraka

Nabhasvāna bhadraka is square in shape, prabhañjana is with six sides They have one bhadra in front The chariots called Vāta and Pavana have two and three bhadras respectively Pṛṣata and Indra chariots are having ten sides and one bhadra The chariot Anila has twelve sides.

The chariots are circular, elliptical, square with six or eight sides or are having semicircular back with two corners in the front (dvyaśravṛtta) Chariots with four sides is Nagara type, with eight sides is Dravida type and the Vesara type of chariot is circular in shape. Chariots with six sides are of Āndhra type The dvyaśravṛtta shaped Chariot is called Kālinga

Chariots meant for battle are having three wheels. Chariots used for sacrificial festivals are of four wheels The festival car is provided with five to ten wheels

Nine types of chariots are described in Aparājitapṛcchā (195 14-33) These are Nandā, Nandyāvarta, Nandighoṣa, Parājaya, Patāka, Padmaka, Pṛthvijaya, Mahodbhava and Śrimeru These chariots are of very small size and may have only decorative value The width of the chariots as the diameter of wheels vary from 10 to 15 angulas (19 to 28 5 cms)

In Viśvakarmīya Rathalakṣanam detailed dimensions of different parts of nine types of chariots are given These are shown in table 1 The descriptions of chariots apart from those of axle wheels and the bhara, from adhiṣṭhāna to stūpī is almost similar to that of a multistoried prāsāda

There are nine types of chariots, depending on their dimensions, three types of best chariots, three of middle chariots and three types of little chariots The chariots are provided with one to three storeys Detailed dimensional drawings of three types of chariots are given in figures 10, 11 and 12 The dimensions are given in angulas The designs of three chariots are different

A three storeyed chariot of Bālāji from a talūka place Pārolā in Jalgaon district is illustrated in fig 13 Pertinant

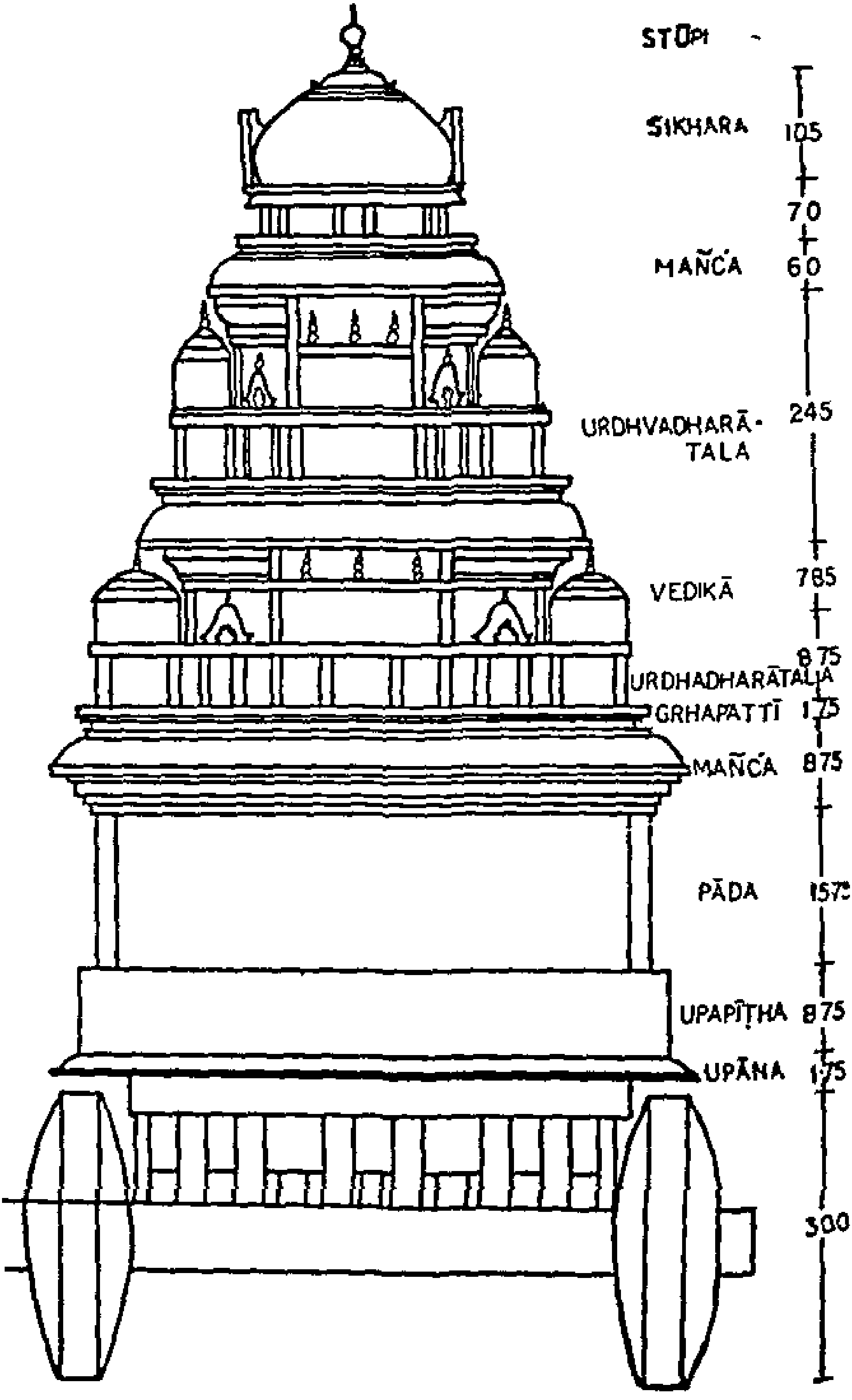


Fig. 10 TWO STOREYED CHARIOT

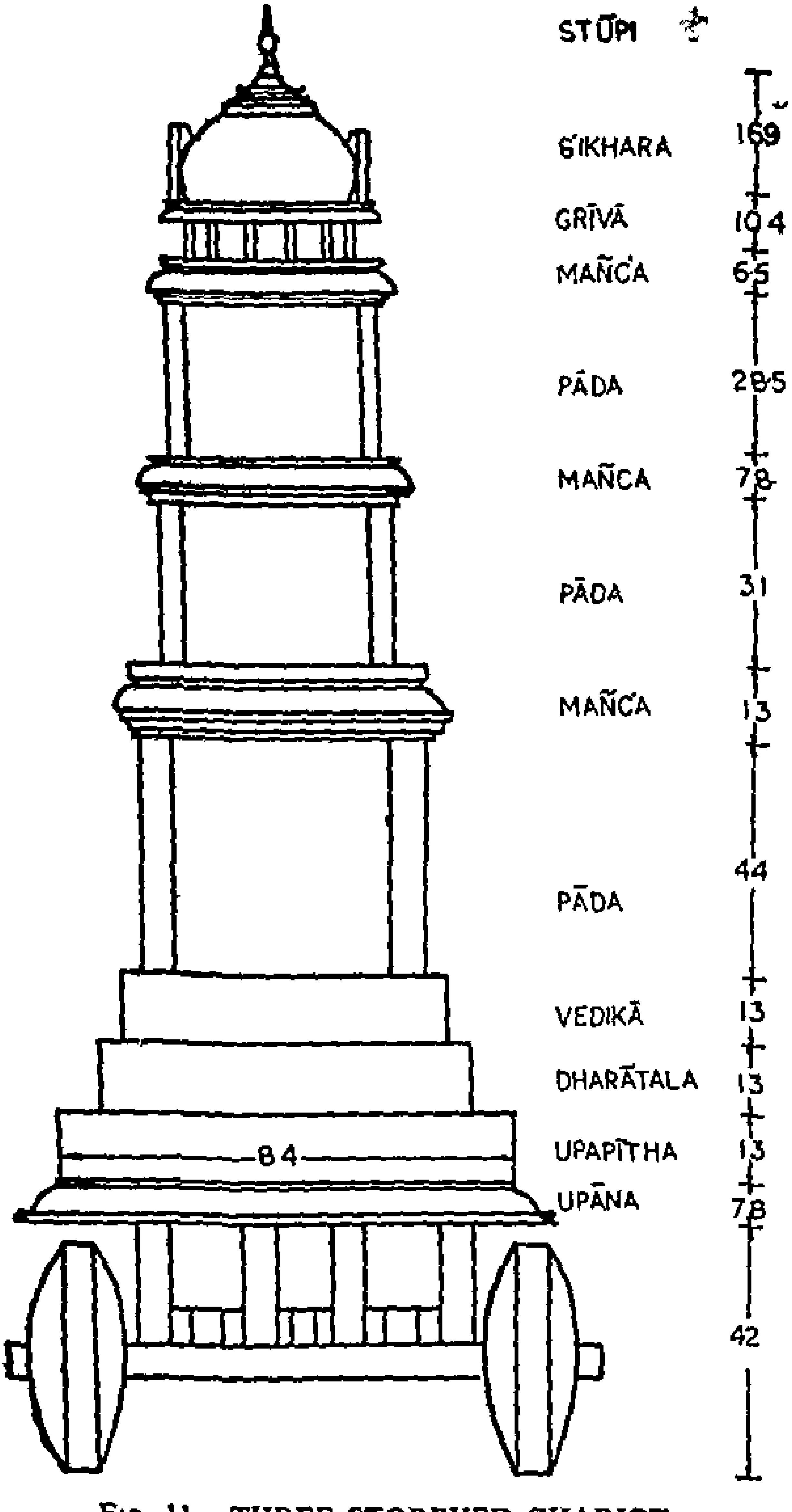
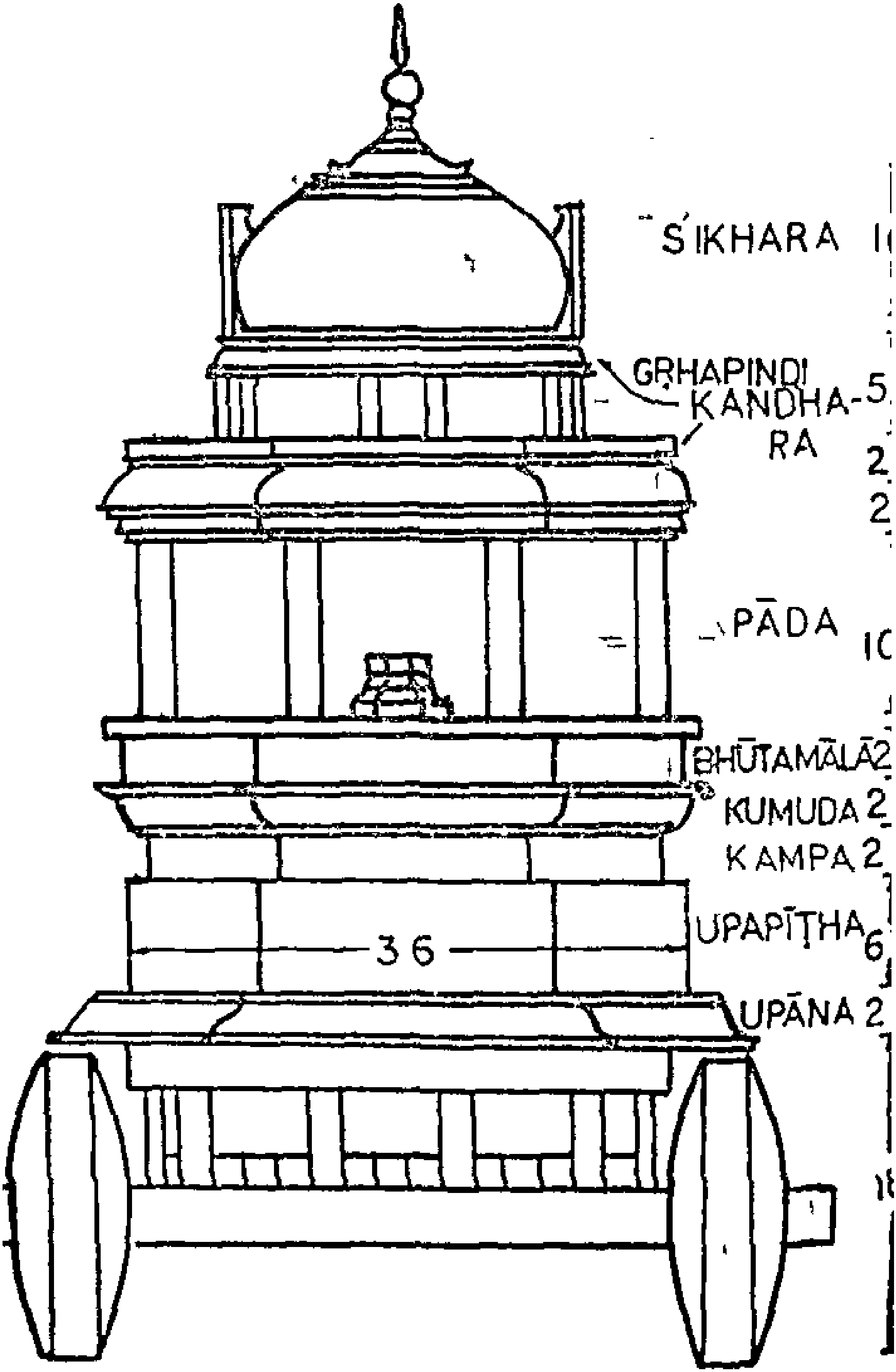


Fig. 11. THREE STOREYED CHARIOT


ŚIKHARA 1
GṚHAPINḌI
KANDHA-5
RA
2
2
PĀDA 1
BHŪTAMĀLĀ2
KUMUDA 2
KAMPA 2
UPAPĪṬHA 6
36
UPĀNA 2
18

dimensions of all the parts of the chariot are given A plan at the axle height is also shown *Fig 14 illustrates a photograph* of this chariot as decorated with horses, charioteer etc at the time of car festival It may be noted that the Śikhara of the chariot is similar to the one found in temples built at the time of Marāthā period

Three types of chariots are mentioned depending on the motif of decoration These are Patrakalpa, Ratnakalpa and Citrakalpa. Patrakalpa chariot is decorated with different designs of tree leaves and creepers and is used for chariots meant for gods Ratnakalpa chariot is the one where different designs of pearls, precious stones and such like are carved It is used by brāhmins A chariot on which different scenes in the life of gods, kings etc, are carved is called citrakalpa and is meant for kings (1 2-4)

Nine (eight ?) types of chariots are described (1.39-40, 1.92-100) These are Śrīkara, Vijya, Kānta, Śrikesa, Viśala, Śribhadra, and Śrivisāla and Bhadrābhadravisāla The chariot Śrikara is meant for kings. It is provided only with adhisthāna and vedikā and is without four posts and a Tower It has two wheels, Vijaya chariot is used at the time of battle and is just like Śrikara but having three wheels The chariot Kānta is with four wheels having four posts and a tower It is, therefore, an ekatāla chariot. Śrikara is having five wheels It may be an ekatāla or dvitāla chariot It is appropiate as a festival car for gods The chariots Viśala is like Śrikeśa (two storeyed type) but *it is provided with a bhadra in front The chariots* Sribhadra and Srivisala are similar to viśala, the only difference *is that that they are having two bhadras, one in front* and other at back, and three bhadras, one in front and two on both sides, respectively *These three types of chariots are having two* storeys The chariots Bhadrābhadra-Visāla have four bhadras on four sides and is of three storeys This type of chariot is decorated like a prāsada having kuṭas, sālās stūpis etc

Vijayānga ratha, chariot for children, for royal prince and *for festivities are mentioned (2 5-5) Jati, Cchanda, Vikalpa and* Ābhāsa are other four types of chariots (2 31-33) These *chariots are with nine, seven, five and four wheels respectively*

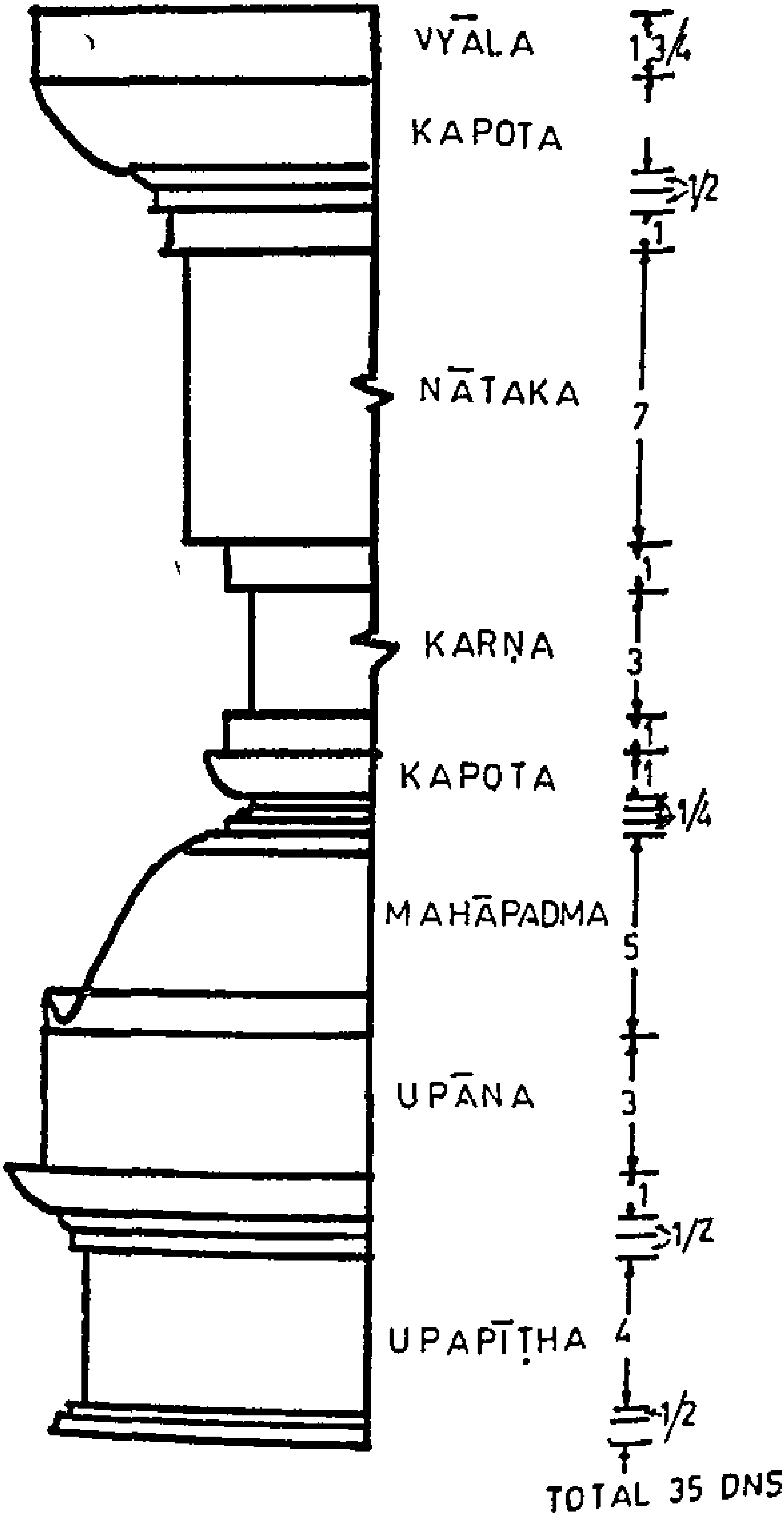


Fig 14 PAMAGRHA CHARIOT

The width-height ratios are $1\frac{1}{4}$, $2\frac{1}{4}$, 2 and $1\frac{3}{4}$ respectively Vardhamāna, Padmagrha, Saubhadra, Sriyivaham, Sribhadra, Ratibhadra, Sripadma and Padmakesara are eight types of festival cars that are described in chapter VII of this treatise The details of different mouldings from Adhisthana to stupi for each type of chariot are described Fig 15 illustrates Padmagrha chariot

As a chariot is decorated with images of different animals, gods, their devotees etc , a chapter is devoted giving dimensions of different limbs of images Descriptions of different gods and their devotees are given

SUMMARY

Chariots described in Vedic literature are meant for battle and for long distance travelling Arrangement of relays of horses was known (Aitareya Brāhmana 19 5) Idea about their dimensions cannot be had They were light in weight, fast and *easy to manoevare Later they were carved as well as painted* They were covered by silk or woollen clothes or by skins of animals Chariots described in Jātaka stories are meant for travelling and for hunting Their use was increased sevenfold for different purposes as given in Kautilya Arthaśāstra The chariots described in treatises of Silpaśāstra are mainly used as festival cars They become large, combursome, pondorous and heavy The utilitarian value of chariots decreased from Gupta period and they become ornamental by medieval period There is no improvement in their status upto modern times

REFERENCES

1 V S Agrawal, "India as known to Panini '

2 B B Havell, ' The Art Heritage of India", plate 30

3. "The Way of the Buddha" Publication Division, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting

TABLE 1

The dimensions of different parts of each type of a chariot according to Visvakarmiya Rathalaksanam

Width of chariot (Angulas)	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	84
Length of chariots (Angulas)	36	42	48	94 50	105	115 50	216	234	252
Dia of the wheel (Angulas)	36	42	48	54	60	66	72	78	84
Wheel thickness at felly (Angulas)	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Wheel thickness at Nabhi (Angulas)	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30	33
Inner Dia of nabhi (Angula)	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Outer Dia of nabhi (Angula)									
1 $\frac{1}{3}$ dia of wheel	12	14	16	18	20	22	24	26	28
2 $\frac{2}{5}$ dia of wheel	$14\frac{2}{5}$	$16\frac{4}{5}$	$19\frac{1}{5}$	$21\frac{3}{5}$	24	$26\frac{2}{5}$	$28\frac{4}{5}$	$31\frac{1}{5}$	$33\frac{3}{5}$
3 $\frac{3}{5}$ dia of wheel	$21\frac{3}{5}$	$25\frac{1}{5}$	$28\frac{4}{5}$	$32\frac{2}{5}$	36	$39\frac{3}{5}$	$43\frac{1}{5}$	$46\frac{4}{5}$	$50\frac{2}{5}$
4 $\frac{1}{2}$ dia of wheel	18	21	24	27	30	33	36	39	42
Dia of the axle (Angulas)	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
The offset of axle beyond wheels (Angulas)	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60	66
Length of the axle (Angula)	54	66	78	90	102	114	126	138	150

TABLE 2

Fifteen types of chariots with one to nine storeys (Manasara, Chapter 43)

Name of the parts	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Dia of the wheel (Vitasti)	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	9	9½	10
Thickness of wheels at rim (angulas)	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Dia of nave (Vitasti)	⅓ rd the dia of the wheel														
Thickness of nave (angulas)	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
Length of the axle (Vitasti)	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	9	9½	10
Length of axle beyond nabhi of a wheel (angula)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Width of the axle (angulas)	5	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21						
Height of the axle (angulas)	7	9	11	13	15	17	19	21	23						
Width of Bhāra (Vitasti)	1	1½	2	2½	3	3½	4	4½	5						
Length of Bhāra (Vitasti)	Twice the breadth of the bhāra														
Height of Bhara (Vitasti)	equal to breadth or 1¼, 1½, 1¾ or 2 times the breadth														
Height of Upapitha	equal to the height of Bhāra or twice or thrice of it														
Breadth of the chariot (Vitasti)	3	3½	4	4½	5	5½	6	6½	7	7½	8	8½	9	9½	10
Height of chariots with one to nine storeys															

APPENDIX—1

A list of Śilpaśastrakāras is given along with the names of books they have written This part is not relevant to the subject

Chapter I gives detailed description of three types of chariots *Patrakalpa to Citrakalpa Descriptions of other* eight types of chariots from Srikara to Bhadrābhadraviśāla are given At the end of the chapter formulae for *Āya*, Nakṣatra, Tārā for chariots are given The colophone of this chapter is ' Itiśāstre vāstubodhāya niyeyanādhika Caturdasodhyayah

Chapter II gives the details of one to three storeyed chariots and mouldings of different parts like upapitha, Adhiṣṭhāna etc After stanza 129, a colophone 'Ityakhilotpatti Viśvakarmiyehi' is given and immediately information on Rathasangrahana is started This pujā vidhi is given from stanza 130 to 155½ The colophone at the end is Iti Vijayatantre Pratiṣṭhātantrekapāde Rathah Sañgrahavidhih 2, patal 2

Chapter III is on the collection of wood for chariot Colophone is Iti Vijayatantre Pratiṣṭhāpāde Kriyatantre Darusañgrahanavidhi patalah.

Chapter IV gives details of images that are carved on the chariot. The Colophone is Iti Vijayatantre Pratisthapade Kriyatantre Rathasangrhavidhi patalah'

Chapter V gives description of different types of Skanda images, Balamukunda, Viṣnu etc This chapter is without any colophone

Chapter VI is given the name 'Ratha laksanama' *It gives* dimensions of chariots again and then gives briefly the locations of different *images on different parts* of the chariot It is a very small chapter of 13½ stanzas

Chapter VI is given the heading 'Nohalyam Rathalaksanam' Here again details of different parts of chariots are given Then the *description of mouldings of Vardhamana to Padmakesara* chariots (eight in number) is given There is no colophone at the end of the chapter

Chapter numbers are arbitrarily given From the brief *description of the manuscript, it seems that it is a collection of* information on chariots obtained from different books The manuscript is corrupt and at many places it is difficult to understand the writing

VĀSTUPURUṢAMAṆḌALA in the PAUṢKARASAṀHITĀ and BṚHAT-SAṀHITĀ

— A Comparative Study —

by

Prabhakar P. Apte and Shreenivas G. Supekar

The description of 'Vāstupurusa Mandala' the ritual Diagram for 'Building-sites' is found at various places in the Purānas *as well as works on Āgama, Śilpa, Jyotiṣa etc* Stella Kramrisch in her book 'The Hindu Temple'[1] has made a detailed study of the Vāstupurusa-Mandala from various sources The earliest source available to her seems to be the Brhat Samhita of Varāha mihira[2] (C 6th C A D) which gives (Ch 53) two types of this ritual diagrams , one with 9×9 = 81 squares and the other with 8×8 = 64 squares A detailed description of this diagram with 9×9 = 81 squares is found in the Pauṣkara Samhita[3] of the Pāñcarātra *Ā*gama which happens to be chronologically earlier than the Brhat-Saṃhitā (BrS) It is one of the three gems of that Āgama in the order Sāttvata-Pauskara-and Jayākhya Of these the Jayākhya Saṃhitā is a dated text belonging to C 450 A D [4], and from the internal evidence it is found to be later than the Pauṣkara Samhitā (*PS*) The portion describing the

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1. Kramrisch, Stella, "*The Hindu Temple,*" Motilal Banarasidas, *Delhi, 1976.*
2. Athale, J. H , "*Bṛhat-Samhita*, (Marathi)", Ratnagiri, 1874
3. Yatiraja Muni, "*Pauṣkara Samhita,*" Yatiraj Mutt, Bangalore 1934.
4. For Jayākhya Samhitā, date, cf
   i) Schrader, F O , "*Introduction to Pāñcarātra* and *Ahirbudhnya Samhitā*, Adyar 1916, P 20
   ii) Bhattacharya B , "Jayākhya Samhitā," Gaikwad Oriental Series No. 54, Baroda, 1931, Introduction P 34

Vastupurusa Mandala (*VPM*) in the third chapter of the *PS* unfortunately suffers from lacunae and corrupt readings This handicap is, however, compensated by the relevant portion in the Īśvara Samhita[5] (C 7th C A D), also an authentic text of the Pāñcarātra Āgama The diagram based on the description in the *PS* and *IS* taken together bears a partial similarity with those based on the *BrS* and other texts taken note of by Stella Kramrisch

The main distinguishing features between the two diagrams are 1) the total number of the deities occupying the squares (the Vastu-Devatās), 2) the mode of allotment of squares to those deities, 3) the use of synonymous epithets for these deities, 4) mode of counting of squares allotted to the deities viz from outer rows to inner rows like a coil of a serpant (*nāgakundala-vat*) and clockwise (*dakṣinā-vartakena*) 5) drawing of lotus figures in the squares

An attempt is made in this paper to evaluate the Vāstus puruṣa-mandala in the *PS* as the earliest available contribution on this subject, taking note of the points of similarity and distinction with those in the later texts like BrS with the help of the diagramatic representation of the description of the VPM

The concept of Vastupurusa in the Hindu Science of Architecture has its origin in the Vedic Srauta tradition of Fire-sacrifice, the all pervading Principle, the Cosmic Purusa, along with the deities is projected through the medium of Vastuśastra in the construction of the temple as its presiding deity

The scholars of the Hindu Science of Architecture are well aware of the astronomical and astrological concepts embodied in the construction of Vāstu The story of the origin of Vastupurusa and His descent on the earth has different versions given in different texts such as BrS, Matsya Purana, *Is*ana-śivagurudevapaddhati, etc

Any construction of a Vāstu is followed by prayers and worship of the Vāstupurusa which embodies the celestial deities

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5 Anantācarya, P B , "*Iśvara Samhita*" Śāstramuktāvali, Series, Kanchipuram 1923

VĀSTUPURUṢAMAṆḌALA

the PAUṢKARASAṂHITĀ ar

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— A Comparative Study —

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VĀSTUPURUṢAMAṆḌALA in the PAUṢKARASAṂHITĀ and BṚHAT-SAṂHITĀ

— A Comparative Study —

four corners with four-petalled lotuses form the unique feature of the *PS*

The deities are serially numbered beginning with Brahmā in the N-E-Corner-lotus (in the pericarp) The total number of deities in the outer enclosure is 45 Their names are: I-1 Brahmā (NE2, SE, SW, and NW), 2) Īsvara, 3) Tapana, 4) Diti and 5) Aditi (=NE corner), II 6 Vāyu, 7) Apavatsa, 8) Jayendra, 9) Samaśiyaka (samariyaka), 10) Ravi, 11) Satya, 12) Atmadeva (=East), III-13) Bhrsa, 14) Gagana, 15) Vibhu, 16) Pūsan (=S-E corner), IV-17) Savitr, 18) Sāvitra, 19) Svastyaya, 20) Grahaksama (Grhaksama), 21) Vivasvān, 22) Dharmadeva, 23) Gandharvādhipati (=South), V-24) Bhrnga, 25) Bhrngarāraja, 26) Pitrganādhipa, 27) Dauvarika (=S-W corner), VI-28) Indra, 29) Indrapada, 30) Sugriva, 31) Kusumadvija, 32) Mitra, 33) Varuna, 34) Asurādhipati (=West), VII-35) Sesa,— 36) Adharma, 37) Yanmayādhipati and 38) Nāgendra (=N-W corner), VIII-39) Pūrvakhya, 40) Rudradāsa, 41) Mukhya, 42) Bhallaka, 43) Somaka, 44) Dharādhara (Dhārādhara) and 45) Matsamjña (=North)

Deities of the second enclosure (*dvitīyāvarana*) and their corresponding syllables are as follows· The total number of squares is 24, and the syllables covered are *a* to *j* — beginning from N-E (*Ī*śānya) corner ,

46) Dhātā (*a*), 47) Yantā (*ā*), 48) Dhruva (*i*), 49) Kāla (*ī*), 50) Kāmā (*u*), 51) Kartā (*ū*), 52) Jayantaka+ (*r*), 53) Jīva (*r*), 54) Prānatīra) (Prānastara+) (*l*), 55) Yajna (*l*), 56) Ravi (*e*), 57) Mrgā (*ai*), 58) Yāmyakā+ (*o*), 59) Lokanātha (*au*), 60) Vidhātā (*am*), 61) Bhaga (*ah*), 62) Srastā (*k*), 63) Niyāmaka (*kh*), 64) Monojava+ (*g*), 65) Kalyāna (*gh*), 66) Parjanya+ (*n*), 67) Dravina (*c*), 68) Srastarah (*ch*), 69) Viśvakarmā (*j*)

The enclosure contains 24 deities of which six are supplied by *IS* and one i e *Prāṇastara* is a different version of *Prāṇatira*, both are not clear

The deities of the thrid enclosure are sixteen in number *having syllables from jh to ph and the numbers are 70 to 85.* The details are as follows

presiding deity. The allocation of these syllables commences with the N-E-*corner of* the second (inner) enclosure of 24 squares and ends with the central square and accommodates 49 syllables from *a* to *h*

6 The diagram based on the *PS* as depicted in the chart is supplemented by the *IS* which gives a better reading of the *otherwise ad verbatim* correspondence. The names of the deities found in the *PS* are noted in the lower part of the lotus while the names improved by the *IS* are written in the upper part of the lotus-diagram *marked by* '+*sign*'

7 The mode of reckoning the assignment of deities as *noted above* is clockwise, both for the corner-lotuses and for the side-lotuses In the case of the corner-lotuses, the starting point is the eastern petal (*pūrvapatra*) and the end-point, the *northern petal, the manner* being ESWN *This is for the outer* perimeter and no lotus in the inner enclosures accommodates more than one presiding deity

8 In the case of the innermost enclosure of eight squares there is no direct and specific mention of the presiding deities The *PS* text leaves gap which is supplemented by the *IS* in a generalised manner as 'one may worship the Lokapālās-beginning with Indra in the fourth enclosure'[7] Here again like *the corner-lotuses the starting point has to be the East and the* end point is the North-East in the manner East, South East, South, South-west, West, North—west and North, and North-East *This list* is *conjecturally completed* here not being supplied in full in the *IS* The list of common knowledge is Indra for Pūrva (Prāci), Agni for Āgneya, Yama for Yāmya (or Dakṣiṇa) Nirṛti for Nairṛtya, Varuṇa for Paścima, Vāyu for Vāyavya, Soma for Uttara, Īśana (or Īśvara), for Īśānya

These points have to be noted in mind in order to have proper understanding of the *PS*—diagram The nature of the diagrams in the BṛS and other texts and the allotment of the squares to various deities therein is of somewhat different nature

The list *of the deities in the PS will* have to be taken enclosure-wise, taking special note of the four corners The

four corners with four-petalled lotuses form the unique feature of the *PS*

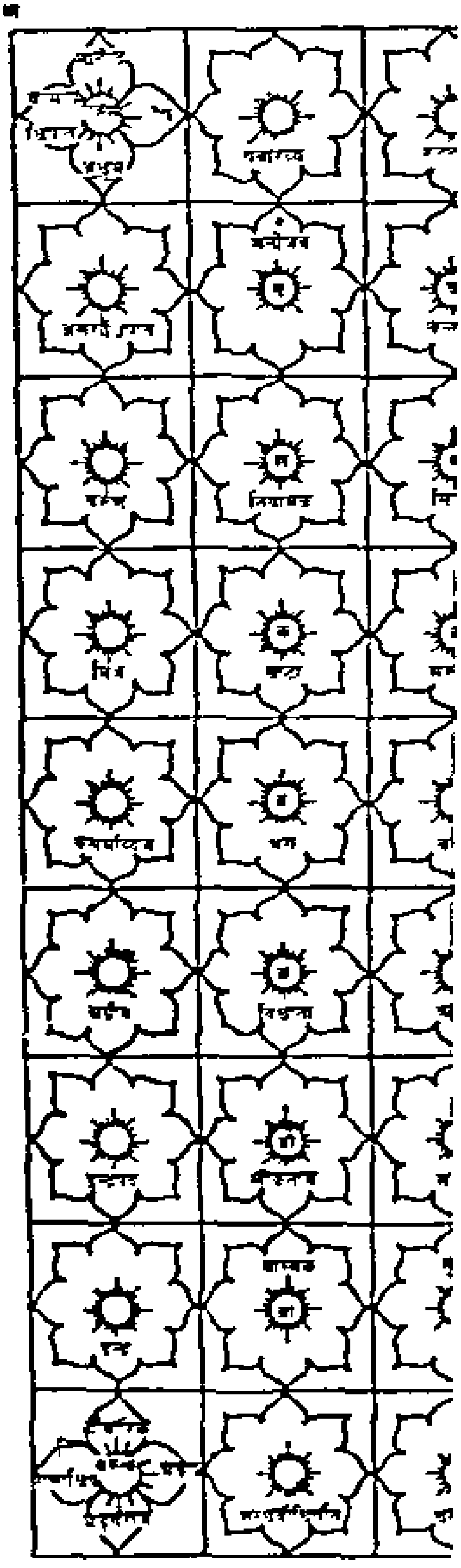
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Deities of the second enclosure (*dvitiyāvarana*) and their corresponding syllables are as follows The total number of squares is 24, and the syllables covered are *a* to *j* — beginning from N-E (*Ī*śānya) corner,

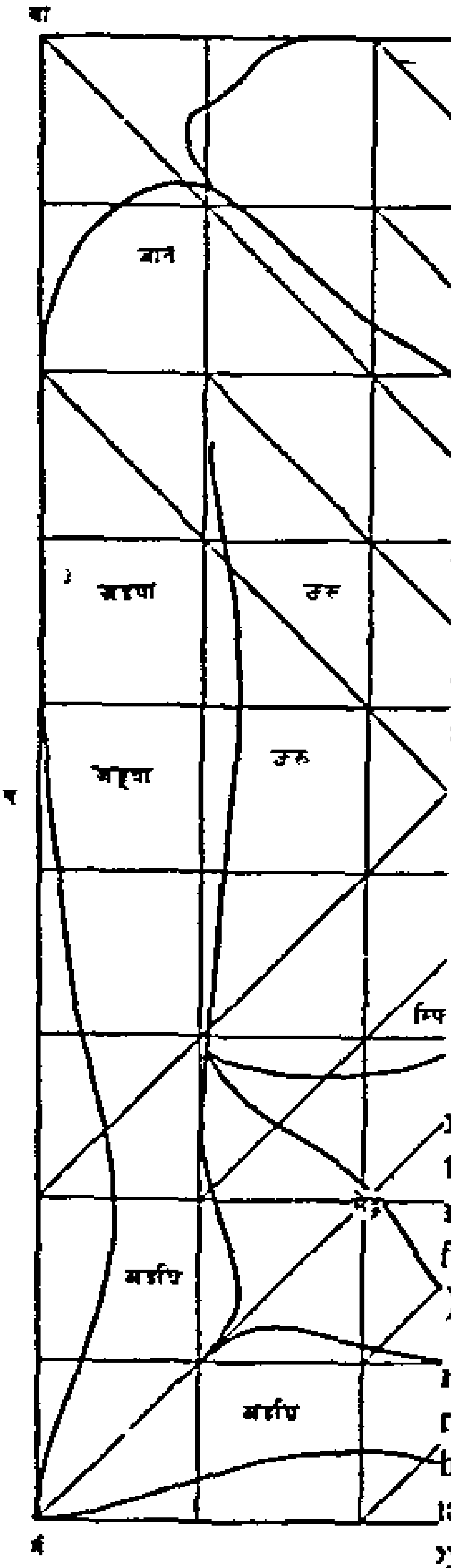
46) Dhāta (*a*), 47) Yanta (*ā*), 48) Dhruva (*i*), 49) Kala (*ī*), 50) Kāmā (*u*), 51) Karta (*ū*), 52) Jayantaka+ (*r*), 53) Jiva (*r*), 54) Pranatira) (Pranastara+) (*l*), 55) Yajna (*l*), 56) Ravi (*e*), 57) Mrga(*ai*), 58) Yamyakā+ (*o*), 59) Lokanātha (*au*), 60) Vidhata (*am*), 61) Bhaga (*ah*), 62) Srasta (*k*), 63) Niyamaka (*kh*), 64) Monojava+ (*g*), 65) Kalyā*n*a (*gh*), 66) Parjanya+ (*n*), 67) Dravina (*c*), 68) Srastarah (*ch*), 69) Visvakarmā (*j*)

The enclosure contains 24 deities of which six are supplied by *ĪS* and one i e *Pranastara* is a different version of *Prānatira*, both are not clear

The deities of the third enclosure are sixteen in number having syllables from *jh* to *ph* and the numbers are 70 to 85 The details are as follows



१ वाह्य आवरण – ३२ (२८
२ द्वितीय आवरण – २४ – अ
३ तृतीय आवरण – १६ – इ
४ चतुर्थ आवरण – ८ – म
५ मध्य पद – १ – ह
= ८१ पदस



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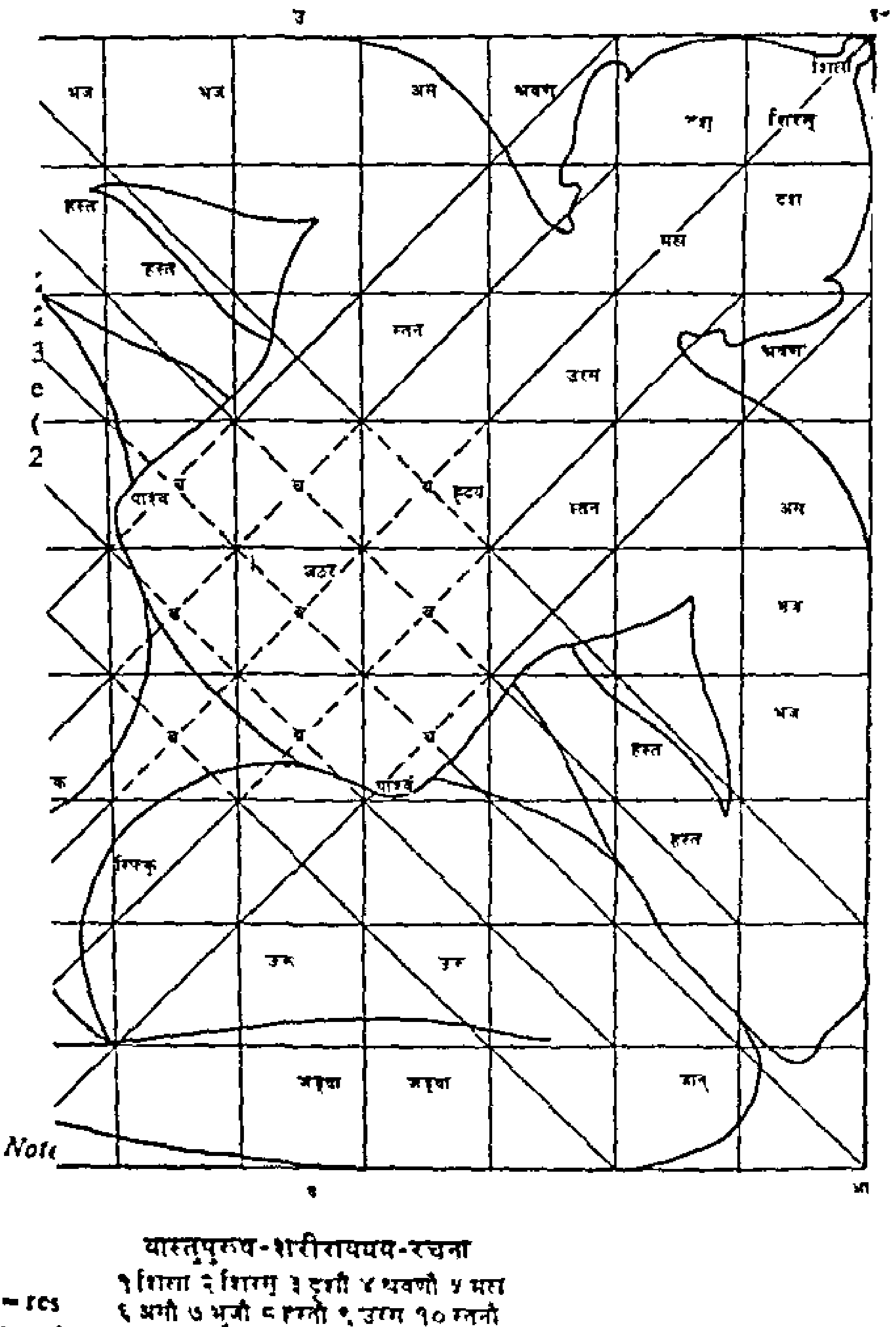
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वास्तुपुरुषाकृति (सावयवा)
(९ × ९ = ८१) बृहत्संहिता (अ ५३)



Note

वास्तुपुरुष-शरीरावयव-रचना

१ शिखा २ शिरस् ३ दृशौ ४ श्रवणौ ५ मुख
६ अंसौ ७ भुजौ ८ हस्तौ ९ उरस् १० स्तनौ
११ हृदय १२ जठर १३ ऊरु १४ जानु
१५ स्फिक् १६ मेढ्र १७ अङ्घ्री

—res serial name

VPM-4

9 The *Vāstupuruṣa* is bodily co-terminus with the *BṛS* diagrams and lying prostrate facing the earth with his head in the N-E corner, The deities occupy His body in various parts Śikhi = Agni — the head, *A*pa the mouth, Aryamā, *Ā*pavatsa, Parjanya and the like - the eyes, the ears, the chest and the shoulder. Satya and other five, the arms and the hands, Savit*ā* Sāvitra, Vitatha and Bṛhatksata - the back, Vivasv*a*n -stomach; Yama and others occupy the thighs, the knees and the buttocks These are on the right side The left-side-parts are occupied by the other corresponding deities Indra and Jayanta occupy the private part, Brahm*a* occupiess the heart, and the Pitṛs occupy the feet

The limbs of the body of the Vāstupuruṣa are drawn with the help of transverse lines diagonally disecting the squares of the diagram.

The joints obtained by the intersection of these lines are described as vital points (Marmasthāna) which are not to *be hurt during the construction of a Vastu* [10]

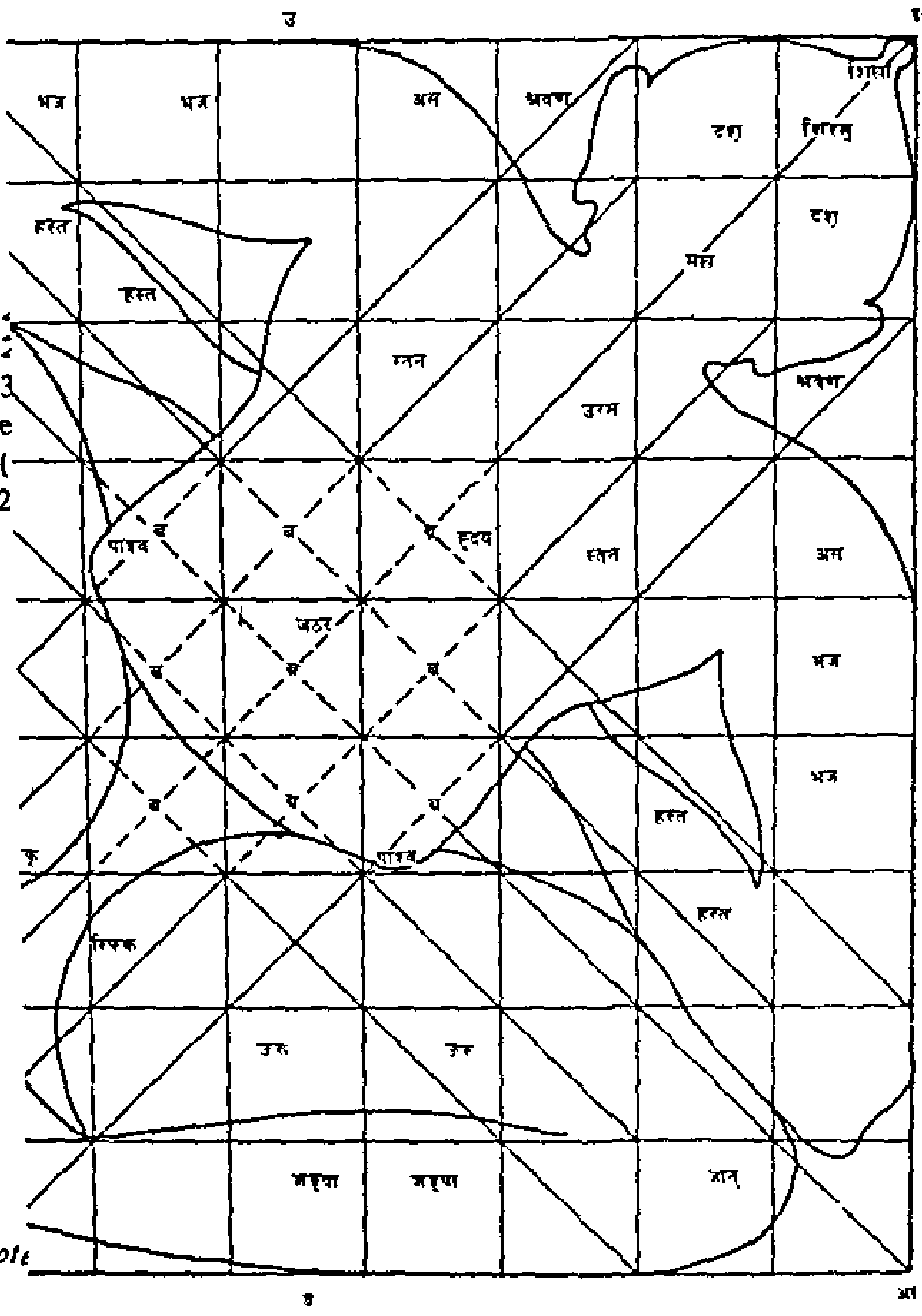
Comparison and contrast between PS diagram - VPM-1
BṛS diagrams VPM-2 and VPM-3 [11]

1. The first distinguishing feature of the *PS* diagram is the decoration of the squares with lotus designs having either 8 petals or 4 petals each The *BrS* diagrams, on the other hand, have plain squares These are diagonally bisected (in the four corners) in the case of the Maṇḍuka plan i e VPM-3 (64 sq)

2 The Paramaśāyika plan has got areawise division of deities as *ekapadika*, etc in multiples of full squares, whereas the Maṇḍuka plan has similar division with multiples of half squares *ardhapadika sārdhapadika* etc In the *PS* plan, we have four-petalled lotuses in the four corners and the deities occupy a single petal each along with Brahm*a* occupying the *pericarp* of each of the four lotuses In this respect the allotment of the area is fractioned beyond one half, that is, one fifth each Another speciality of the *PS* calculation is that Brahmā presides over all the four corners sharing only one fifth of each corner along with other deities In this respect He can be aptly called

वास्तुपुरुषाकृति (सावयवा)

(९ × ९ = ८१) बृहत्संहिता (अ ५३)



वास्तुपुरुष-शरीरावयव-रचना

१ शिरा २ शिरस् ३ दृशौ ४ श्रवणौ ५ मर्म
६ अंसौ ७ भजौ ८ हस्तौ ९ उरस् १० स्तनौ
११ हृदय १२ जठर १३ उरु १४ जानु
१५ लिङ्ग १६ मेढ्र १७ अङ्घ्री

VPM-4

9 The Vāstupuruṣa is bodily co-terminus with the *BṛS* diagrams and lying prostrate facing the earth with his head in the N-E corner. The deities occupy His body in various parts Śikhī = Agni — the head, Āpa the mouth, Aryamā, Āpavatsa, Parjanya and the like - the eyes, the ears, the chest and the shoulder. Satya and other five, the arms and the hands, Savitā Sāvitra, Vitatha and Bṛhatksata - the back; Vivasvān -stomach; Yama and others occupy the thighs, the knees and the buttocks These are on the right side The left-side-parts are occupied by the other corresponding deities Indra and Jayanta occupy the private part, Brahmā occupiess the heart, and the Pitṛs occupy the feet

The limbs of the body of the Vāstupurusa are drawn with the help of transverse lines diagonally disecting the squares of *the diagram*

The joints obtained by the intersection of these lines are described as vital points (Marmasthāna) which are not to be hurt during the construction of a Vāstu [10]

Comparison and contrast between PS diagram - VPM-1 BṛS diagrams VPM-2 and VPM-3 [11]

1. The first distinguishing feature of the *PS* diagram is the decoration of the squares with lotus-designs having either 8 petals or 4 petals each The *BṛS* diagrams, on the other hand, have plain squares These are diagonally bisected (in the four corners) in the case of the Manduka plan i e VPM-3 (64 sq)

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as Caturmukha Brahmā, the four faced God The central square of the VPM-1 is assigned to Viśvarūpa or Visnu from whose navel sprouts the primordial lotus

3 The total number of deities in *PS* diagram VPM-1 is more than the number of squares whereas it is less in the case of of *BṛS* diagrams - VPM-2 and VPM-3

4 The categories based on area-allotment in the case of *PS* is unlike both the diagrams of *BṛS* It is, as a rule, *ekapadika* for the 77 squares and 1/5 *padika* in the case of corner squares and 4/5 *padika* in the case of Brahmā

5 The mode of counting in VPM 1 is continuous, beginning in the N-E corner with the eastern petal and going clockwise both in the case of petals as well as squares In the case of *BṛS* however, the method is twofold i) clockwise, starting with N-E and completing the outer perimeter in the first phase and ii) starting with the central square and completing the surrounding enclosure and then the corners of the middle enclosure

6 The surplus squares in the middle enclosure are then allotted to the deities of the outer square by way of additional area

7 With reference to the relevance of instructions about constructing particular portions of a building or a township on a particular square of *VPM*, the point to be considered is how to explain these instructions in the light of different versions allotting different places in different diagrams for the same deities

It has already been observed that *BṛS* diagram of 64 sq is obtained by contraction of *BṛS* diagram of 81 squares This process does not very much disturb the basic arrangement For example, the deity No 1 in the East, that is, Parjanya in the outer perimeter shares one half in the N E corner along with deity No 32 that is, Diti which is the last one on the northern side In this case, though these two deities are pushed to the corner, all the same they take that half which is adjacent to their corresponding positions in the VPM-2 of 81 sq In the

case of the inner rows of *BrS* (VPM-2 and VPM 3), the corner deities of the middle enclosure are pushed to the corresponding adjacent corner of the inner enclosure Since *VPM* 2 and VPM 3 belong to the same text viz *BrS*, any change of positions of deities will have some bearing in the integrated scheme of architecture, astronomy and astrology of that text The *PS* contains not only different versions in the list of deities given in *BrS* but also an additional list of deities Besides *PS* does not contain the instructions to correlate the areas of these deities to architectural portion through the medium of astronomical relevance probably indicating a *VPM* tradition earlier than *BrS* At present it is possible to note the comparison of the two lists of deities regarding the VPM diagram based on *PS* and *BrS* texts

i) This comparison commences with N E corner *VPM* I of *PS* accommodates both Diti and Aditi-which are Nos 31 and 32 of *BrS* in the northern side, - within the N-E corner in the western and northern petals of the lotus respectively Fortunately these petals are adjacent to the northern side of the diagram

ii) On the East of the *VPM*, the only common deity is Satya with a slight difference of position fifth for *BrS* and sixth for *PS* Jayanta and Indra, nos. 2 and 3 of *BrS* are, perhaps, combined in one, namely, Jayendra Sūrya of *BrS* is the same as Ravi of *PS*

iii) Bhrsa of the East and Pusan of the South in *BrS* diagrams are accommodated in the *PS* diagram in the S E-corner Antariksa of East in *BrS* is also accommodated in the S-E corner, perhaps under the synonymous name Gagana

iv) *On the southern side, Brhatksata of BrS is, perhaps,* equivalent to Grahaksana of *PS*, and Yama to Dharmadeva & Gandharva to Gandharvādhipati of *PS* Mrga of *BrS* is pushed to S W corner in *PS* The *PS* deities Savitr, Sāvitra which take first and second positions in the South of the outer row are accommodated in the *BrS* diagrams in the inner row of S E corner. Vivasvān who is on the fifth place here as per *PS*-plan

occupies complete southern side of the enclosure around the central presiding deity Brahmā

v) Pitṛ of *BṛS* is equivalent to Pitṛganādhipa of *PS*, and takes the same position, viz the S W-corner in both the plans The *PS* plan, however, accommodates in this corner, two more deities of *BṛS* viz. Bhṛngarāja of the southern side and Dauvārika of the western side

vi) On the West of VPM, Sugrīva is common to both, with a little shift viz third position in *PS* and second in *BṛS* Kusumadvija of *PS* is Kusumadanta in BṛS (danta = Tooth) Varuṇa of *PS* is Ambupati in *BṛS* and Asuradhipati of *PS* is Asura of BṛS Indra of *PS* takes a place in the -W corner in the inner row and Mitra resides by Brahma on the Western side

vii) Papayaksma of *BṛS* is not found in the *PS* list However, the reading, *Yanmay*adhipati' in *PS* may be emended to 'Yaksmadhipati' which may be equated either to Pāpayakṣmā or Rajayakṣmā to serve the purpose Seṣa of *PS* may be equated to Śoṣa of *BṛS* In this two deities of *BṛS* on the western side can be accommodated in the N W corner of *PS* Nagendra of *PS* in this corner may be equated to Ahi of *BṛS* on the northern side

viii) There are three common deities in the *BṛS* and *PS* lists on the northern side Mukhya, Bhallāṭa and Soma of *BṛS* appearing on the second, third and fourth positions of *VMP*-North corresponding to Mykhya, Bhallaka and Somaka of *PS* appearing on the third fourth and fifth positions respectively Rudradāsa of *PS* is, perhaps, Rudra of *BṛS* occupying N W corner of the inner corner row and Dharadhara of *PS*, occupying the northern side of Brahmā as Pṛthvīdhara of *BṛS*

ix) The speciality of *PS* seems to suffix the names of the deities especially denoting a class, with *adhipa* or *adhipati* the chief of a particular class, namely, Gandharv*adhipati*, Pitṛgan*adhipa* and Asur*adhipati* This justifies the suggestion of *Yakṣma*dhipati, as an intelligible reading for *Yanmay*adhipati of *PS* which is obviously corrupt In some cases a single term in the *PS* like *Jayendra* seems to be duplicated as *Jayanta* and *Indra* in the *BṛS* In some other cases, however, pairs in *PS*

like Bhrnga and Bhrngarāja, Indra and Indrapada are contracted to a single term Bhrngarāja, Indra etc in the *BrS*

x) In the enclosure no 2, *BrS* diagrams allot all the side-squares to the outer deities but the *PS* / *IS* list is elaborate and practically different from the *BrS* list Mrga of *IS*-list on the southern side of the second row corresponds to Mrga of the the *BrS* also on the southern side of the outer row There is only one repetition in the *BrS* list viz Indra who occupies one square in the ou er row (East) and one in the midd'e inner row (S W) reducing the total number of Vāstudevatas from 45 to 44 The *PS* list added by the *IS*-list of Lokapalas naturally causes repetition to that extent since they have occupied their respective places in the outer enclosure Some apparent repetitions due to synonymous mention of deities like Sūrya Savitr Ahi Bhujaga etc occur in both the lists It is, however, difficu t to reduce this list on this count, because Sanskrit synonyms are often treated as independent entities in the Hindu mythology Minor variations in the location of these deities are already noted One more point to be noted in the case of *PS* plan (81 sq) is that the four Dikpālas do not occupy the central position on those sides As per the *BrS* 81 sq plan i e VPM 2 Yama, Ambupati and Soma occupy exactly central positions in the southern, western and northern sides respectively and Indra takes a square adjacent to that of Sūrya who occupies the central square on the eastern side VPM 3 of the *BrS*, due to the even number of squares (8×8=64), obviously cannot allot the central square to the Dikpālas who get positions just left of the central line

The comparison of *PS* and *BrS* lists gives 15 deities having exact correspondence and 16 more having very minor variations The allocation of the deities in the *PS* and *BrS*, though different in nature, is comparable to the shifting of place that occurs during the internal change over from the bigger diagram to the smaller one in the case of *BrS* The corner lotuses in the *PS* plan, for instance accommodate some deities which occupy full squares on the corresponding adjacent sides in the *BrS* (81 sq) plan In the case of the *BrS* 64 sq -diagram some deities have to be accommodated in the halves of the corner In the case of *PS* (81 sq) this accommodation takes place in

the lotus petals in the corners, not because the diagram is small but because the deities are more The *PS* has practically exhausted the list of all the deities of the *BṛS* which are common, including Brahmā surrounded by *dvipadika* or *tripadika* deities Aryamā, Vivasvān, Mitra and pṛthvīdhara in the outer-most enclosure The entire inner plan of the *PS* of 49 squares (24+16+8+1) with their presiding deities and the corresponding syllables (*mātṛkas*) assigned to them is the unique feature of this text Whether there is any specific architectural relevance of the plan of *PS* (VPM-1) will have to be otherwise investigated through comparative external evidence, since there is no direct internal evidence, to throw enough light on this important aspect

Résumé

By way of general observations about the topic of the Vāstumaṇḍala diagrams and the significance of the *PS* evidence, the following points are noteworthy

1) If the *PS* evidence is accepted to be chronologically earlier than the available Sanskrit literature on this subject, *PS* text will have to be evaluated as an early authentic contribution on the topic of VPM It is to be further noted that except *IS* no other Āgama text seems to have faithfully preserved the *PS* version of VPM On the contrary, if it is to be regarded that the version other than *PS* ie BṛS etc is earlier and authentic, it might presumably be taken as a counter-evidence to revise the date of *PS* itself Eitherway a comparative study is going to be useful from the chronological point of view.

2) From the technical point of view, the thorough grasp of the mode of diagrammatic representation of a model text like the *PS* would equip a researcher with a better insight into cognate technical portions of other texts describing different versions of VPM We may take for example, a portion from the Khilādhikāra of Bhṛgusaṃhitā[12] where Brahmā gets nine squares in the centre. The diagram, however, has only (8×8=) 64 squares, consequently the possible allotment for

12 "*Bhṛgu Saṃhitā - Khilādhikāra*" - Ed Pārthasārathy Bhattacharya, T T Devasthanam Publication Tirupati, 1961, 3 81-83

Brahmā is $2 \times 2 = 4$ and not $3 \times 3 = 9$, because a diagram of even divisions cannot afford an odd number at the centre The likely reason for the anamoly here is that the textual portion describing the central part of the diagram of 81 squares, has been erroneously inserted in the textual description of the diagram of 64 squares

3) Architectural relevance of VPM has already been noted and will have to be further investigated in the light of the *PS* diagram VPM has several versions in relevant portions of Āgama-Purana texts etc of various dimensions ($1 \times 1 = 1$ to $32 \times 32 = 1024$) bearing different technical names Allotment of areas to various deities in these diagrams also varies. The convention about prescription of various diagrams for temples, palaces etc also varies This point has not been elaborated for the obvious reason of lack of adequate *PS* evidence in this respect

4) The astronomical relevance of the VPM in the field of architecture is of great importance. As far as PS is concerned, it is difficult to correlate this on the basis of internal evidence It is, however, noteworthy that the list of additional deities in the inner enclosures of the VPM-I diagram respectfully accommodates the cosmic principles including the celestial and terrestrial ones like Tarakas, Maruts, Nadis, Dvipas, etc

5) An architectural monument (Vāstu) is traditionally regarded as a microcosmic representation of macrocosm the, creation of the Almighty A Vastu is supported on the body of the Vāstupurusa to accommodate the heavenly deities The concept is attested in the *PS*[13] which describes Vāstupurusa as *sakala* and a reflection of the omnipresent lord (Viśvarūpa Vibhu) in whose body the entire congregation[14] of deities (*devata cakra*) takes shelter

6) From the ritual point of view, the *PS* prescribes an elaborate form of worshipping the Vāstunātha or Vastupurusa

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13 *PS* 3 58

14. *PS* 3 91-92

on the lines of the usual image worship *IS* adds to this, such items as Agni-tarpana, Kumbha-Pūjā and Maṇḍala Pūjā

7) The *PS* cautions that unless the Vastupuja is properly performed, *Vastuksetra or the site for the proposed building* will not yield the desired fruit [15] The ideal worship on the other hand would unfold for the worshipper all *siddhis* leading to eternal peace The *siddhis* according to *PS* are aimed at the attainment of *Mokṣa*, the Summum Bonum

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15. *PS* 3 94 96.